- **LIFESTYLE / C1**
  2bU! summer guide: Road trip with friends, comedy in the city, finding your New Age self, etc.
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  Suicide bombers kill 23 in Egypt's popular Red Sea resort district
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  Bishop Soc Villegas hits GMA administration for STL in Bataan

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, April 26, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 137 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Gonzalez orders NBI to investigate graduate

SIGURO MASKI AKO KAKASUHAN NG GONZALEZ NA YAN!

By Leila B. Salaverria

JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez said a crime had been committed when a graduating student stood up, unfurled a banner and called for President Macapagal-Arroyo's ouster during graduation rites at the

GONZALEZ/ A10

Malacañang backtracks on lifting of 12% oil VAT

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michelle V. Remo

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY BACKTRACKED ON its proposal to lift the 12-percent value-added tax on petroleum products in the wake of adverse market reactions and objections from the country's economic managers.

The peso and Philippine stocks weakened yes-

MALACAÑANG/ A8

Erap, Ping tagged conspirators in US spy case

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella have been identified as conspirators in a plot to get US intelligence materials from suspected spy Leandro Aragoncillo, the Star-Ledger newspaper reported yesterday.

Assistant US Attorney Karl Buch for the first time publicly named the three during a hearing in Newark, New Jersey, on Monday as alleged participants in the unprecedented espionage case involving the White House, according to the newspaper.

Estrada, Lacson and Fuentebella were described in charging documents as "unindicted coconspirators" with Aragoncillo, a Philippine-born former intelligence agent and White House analyst suspected of passing confidential materials to opposition leaders in his homeland.

Investigators believe the three men might have sought the information as part of a plan to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo, the newspaper said.

Asked for comment, Estrada laughed off the allegation.

Estrada said there was nothing "classified" in the papers he received either from Aragoncillo or his coaccused, Michael Ray Aquino. The two were arrested last year in connection with allegations they had pilfered 100 pieces of information from Washington and passed them in e-mails to Ms Arroyo's opponents.

"What I got were reports of the US Embassy about events that had happened here. There was nothing written there that we did not already know," Estrada told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Lacson downplayed the newspaper report. "If they were going to indict us, they should have indicted us nine months ago when Aquino and Aragoncillo were taken into custody," Lacson said in a telephone interview.

Fuentebella declined immediate comment, saying he would like to read

ERAP, PING/ A6

WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENSE? Michael Ray Aquino's lawyer is seeking depositions from Estrada and Lacson.

SC rules Palace ban on rallies is illegal

Decision is unanimous: 13-0

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—IN A SECOND MAJOR BLOW TO President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Supreme Court yesterday declared unconstitutional her policy allowing police to break up antigovernment rallies held without permits.

"The so-called calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy has no place in our legal firmament and must be struck down as a darkness that shrouds freedom," the high court said in its 13-0 decision.

"It merely confuses our people and is used by some police agents to justify abuses," said the 36-page ruling penned by Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna. Associate Justices Reynato Puno and Minita Chico-Nazario were on leave and did not join in the voting.

Malacañang announced the CPR policy last September after Ms Arroyo escaped an impeachment attempt in the House of Representatives over allegations she stole the May 2004 presidential election and her opponents announced they would take to the streets to press their demand that she resign. Ms Arroyo has denied any wrongdoing.

On Friday, the Supreme Court also struck down a gag rule contained in Executive Order No. 464. The order prohibited government and military officials from appearing at congressional hearings without Ms Arroyo's consent. This decision, by a 14-0 vote, affirmed Congress' right to information from the executive branch whenever it is sought in aid of legislation and the right of the people to take part in government.

In its latest ruling issued in Baguio City, where the justices are holding their summer session, the tribunal directed Executive Secretary Eduar-

SC RULES/ A12

IN FULL SWING, police preparations, that is, for the May 1 Labor Day rallies, include a demonstration of the Crowd Dispersal Management competition staged by members of the Regional Special Crowd Unit. RODEL ROTONI

SC Chief Justice: Death penalty is unconstitutional

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
and Philip C. Tubeza
in Manila

BAGUIO CITY—MOVES TO ABOLISH THE death penalty received a big boost when no less than Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban said the law on capital punishment "as written" was unconstitutional.

Speaking on Monday at the first Supreme Court media seminar at the Baguio Country Club, the country's top jurist said it was now up to Congress to repeal Republic Act No. 7659.

Panganiban's remarks drew immediate reactions in the House of Representatives. One congressman sounded elated, but another said the Chief Justice should have "shut up."

"The death penalty law as written is unconstitutional," Panganiban said. "Thus, it follows that lethal injection would also be unconstitutional."

He said that while the 1987 Constitution scrapped capital punishment, Congress was given the power to restore it on two conditions—that it be restored for heinous crimes and only on proof of "compelling reasons."

"Congress was not able to show the compelling reasons and the crimes mentioned therein are not heinous, anyway not all of them," Panganiban said.

The options available to lawmakers are to "reduce the number of crimes punishable by death or abolish the death penalty entirely," he said.

In her Easter message, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that all death sentences would be commuted to life imprison-

SC CHIEF/ A10

Biazon to Palace: Go easy on talk of May Day coup

By TJ Burgonio, Christine O. Avendaño and Luige A. del Puerto

SEN. RODOLFO BIAZON YESTERDAY CAUtioned Malacañang about warning of a Labor Day coup lest it be misconstrued as conditioning the people's minds that it was about to issue a new proclamation to quell violent rallies.

Biazon, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, ruled out any plot by rebel soldiers to mount a coup despite the lingering political crisis, but he acknowledged that the threat of a withdrawal of support by officers was real.

The Arroyo administration has been hounded by destabilization attempts since the "Hello Garci" tape scandal broke out in June last year, but the threat of a coup was "nonexistent," Biazon said.

"I'm asking Malacañang to be careful about always raising the threat of a coup because the threat of a coup is nonexistent even at the height of instability starting after the waving of the two

BIAZON/ A12

Faith defenders turn 'converts' to 'reverts'

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE SPIRITUAL SERENITY OF Tibetan Buddhism lured a man in his 40s out of Catholicism. For almost a decade, he wore a monk's robe, becoming the first and only Filipino lama.

Not long ago, too, an 18-year-old student from a Catholic university in Manila left the faith, joining his father who had walked with Mormons.

At a government agency in Port Area, Manila, all but one employee abandoned Catholicism and had themselves baptized as Born Again Christians.

The search for spiritual relief, a reenergized faith, a more contextual religion or, simply, a better company of believers, is taking a number of Catholics elsewhere.

And unfortunately for the Catholic community, those who had left seemed convinced that the answers lay anywhere but in their 2,000-year-old faith.

A relatively new Catholic group hopes to provide some important help.

Since 2000, Defensores Fides, a small band of predominantly lay

FAITH/ A8

Nepali king bows to people power

KING GYANENDRA had no choice but to give in to the demands of his people.

KATMANDU, NEPAL—HUNDREDS of thousands of people held a victory rally in Nepal's capital on Tuesday after King Gyanendra announced he was reinstating parliament.

Tens of thousands also crowded near the palace, demanding he leave the country. But rows of riot police blocked the demonstrators less than 500 meters from Katmandu's Narayanhity Palace. There were no reports of violence.

The crowds made no attempt to break through but tore down metal signboards carrying excerpts from the king's speeches and shouted "Gyanendra, thief, leave the country."

The turmoil in the Himalayan

NEPALI/ A6

VICTORY PARADE in the streets of Katmandu celebrates restoration of democracy. Nepal's opposition alliance on Tuesday called off weeks of protests. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will continue to experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/25/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

House pushes Cha-cha plan B

By Michael Lim Ubac

EVEN AS DEBATE RAGES ON THE PEOPLE'S INItiative for Charter change, the House of Representatives is pushing ahead with its own plans to amend the Constitution through a constituent assembly.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula, the chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, yesterday filed House Resolution No. 1230 calling for a constituent assembly to introduce constitutional amendments. It was signed by 173 lawmakers as co-authors.

Jaraula said that although the majority coalition failed to come up with the required 195 signatures immediately, "the rest of [the] signatures will come as actual votes in [the] plenary."

He said he expected the resolution to be tackled by the chamber next month and approved before Congress adjourns on June 10.

"The 195 will constitute the constitutional requirement for Congress to effect changes in the Constitution," he said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia contends that only three-fourths of all the members of Congress, or 195, would be needed for Congress to constitute itself into a constituent assembly.

The Senate, which is largely opposed to Charter change, wants the longer route via a constitutional convention of elected delegates.

Attached to HR 1230 is a draft Constitution abolishing the Senate to pave the way for a unicameral parliament.

Once the House plenary adopts the draft, the next step is approval through a plebiscite.

The draft Constitution will not pass through the Senate for either modification or concurrence.

"We are not closing doors. But we can't say that we will sit down with the Senate if the senators don't want to," said Jaraula.

Jaraula said the House resolution calling for a constituent assembly was not in conflict with the Palace-backed people's initiative. He said the two would complement each other.

"It will depend on which comes first," he said.

He explained that the proposals of the people's initiative with regard to Article 6 and 7 of the 1987 Constitution—changing the system of government with transitory provisions—were "substantially the same as the House proposals."

The difference is that the people's initiative only contemplates a shift to a parliamentary system with a unicameral parliament while the House resolution proposes a "package of amendments" in the political and economic provisions of the Charter.

Jaraula said the draft Constitution called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to "share power with the interim prime minister," limiting her functions to certain areas.

"During the interim, when the interim parliament shall have elected an interim prime minister, the likelihood is for President Arroyo to delegate some powers to the prime minister. It's not diminishing her powers but enhancing her ability to govern by having more time for a focused area," said Jaraula.

"A delegated power can be withdrawn anytime. So it will not diminish [her powers]. The administrative/bureaucratic work will be left with the prime minister," he said.

Gringo tagged in Oakwood mutiny

A MARINES CAPTAIN YESTERDAY ACCUSED former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan in court of planning a mutiny against the President in July 2003 and agitating soldiers to seize political power.

Honasan, hailed as a hero of the "people power" uprising that toppled dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, is on trial with 37 active and retired soldiers over the bloodless, one-day takeover of Oakwood Premiere a luxury apartment complex in Manila's financial district (See related stories on Page A5 and A7).

Honasan, a former army colonel who is also charged with rebellion along with 48 others over an alleged coup plot against President Macapagal-Arroyo in February, has been in hiding for two months and has not appeared in court.

Pedrito Dulanas, a Marines captain and prosecution witness, said Honasan had told a group of captains and lieutenants during secret meetings in June 2003 that "force, violence and armed struggle should be used to overthrow the government."

Dulanas said he was recruited by another Marines captain, Gary Alejano. The two were assigned, at that time, to the elite presidential security group guarding Arroyo and her family.

At one meeting, Honasan described Arroyo and Angelo Reyes, then her defense secretary, as "very corrupt," Dulanas said.

Dulanas told the court he was terrified by Honasan's warning that "if we can kill our enemies, we can also kill our comrades," so he pretended to go along with the plan. *Reuters*

Lim, Trillanes named but not charged in coup

By Leila B. Salaverria

SOME OF THOSE RECOMMENDED for investigation in connection with the attempted coup on Feb. 24 escaped being charged with rebellion by the Department of Justice.

Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes and several other rebel military officers had been tagged by witnesses in the preliminary investigation conducted by the DOJ as having been present at meetings of the groups plotting to overthrow the Arroyo administration, yet no charges were filed against them unlike six party-list representatives and 42 others, including former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison.

"In the interest of justice, and that is our role, and to have a complete picture of the case if they are really involved, there is a need to investigate this," said Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, head of the DOJ panel that recommended the filing of rebellion charges against the party-list congressmen and the rest.

Velasco said the reason Trillanes, Lim and the others were not investigated although their names came up in the probe was that they were not named in the complaint the Philippine National Police had submitted to the DOJ.

"There was no recommendation for them to be charged. But their names were in the affidavits, which was why we recommended their investigation in our resolution," Velasco told reporters.

Aside from Trillanes and Lim, others recommended for investigation for rebellion were Albert de Mesa Guyal and Col. Rafael Galvez.

Trillanes was a leader of the failed Oakwood mutiny of 2003,

while Lim, leader of the elite Scout Rangers Regiment, had threatened to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo during the Edsa I 20th anniversary celebration on Feb. 24.

Galvez had participated in a 1989 coup attempt against President Corazon Aquino.

According to the DOJ, witness Allan Jones Salem of the

Philippine Army pointed to Trillanes as the head of the Makabayang Kawal ng Pilipino (MKP), which was recruiting members to overthrow the government.

Salem said he also saw Lim at two MKP meetings in Metro Manila and Galvez in one.

"According to the affidavits, they were present in the formation of the tactical alliance," Velasco said.

Guyal, on the other hand, was identified by two witnesses as the person who was with escaped mutineer 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan when the latter was recaptured in February following his escape from detention. *With Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Probers cite gov't lapses on Lafayette

By Blanche S. Rivera

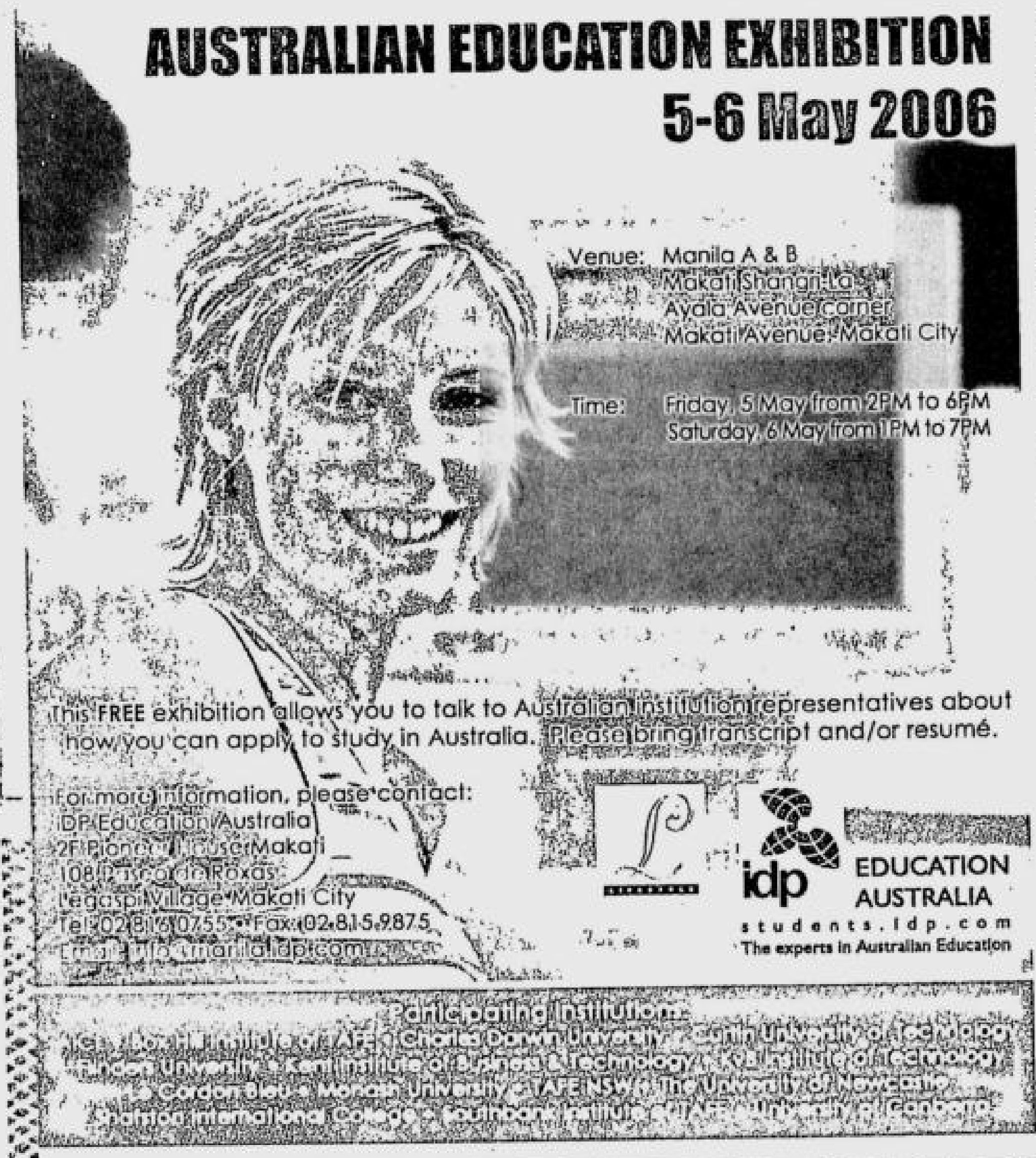
NEARING THE CONCLUSION OF ITS investigation into the mine spills in Albay province, the Rapu-Rapu Fact-finding Commission yesterday said it has so far found government lapses in enforcing laws intended to protect the interest of the Filipino people.

Charles Avila, the commission's vice chair, yesterday said the Philippines appeared to have been a "captive State" in the mine spill case as it apparently failed to make the mining company, the Australia-based Lafayette Phil., comply with government directives.

Lafayette, which operates the copper and gold mine in Rapu-rapu island located off the eastern coast of Albay province, has been accused of spilling contaminated mining wastes into the region's waters.

"What's coming out now from the information given to us is state insufficiency, the state's inability to regulate. In short, state surrender to [the] private sector," said Avila.

The commission conducted its last hearing on the Lafayette case yesterday and will submit its report to President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 5. *With Alda Quodala*



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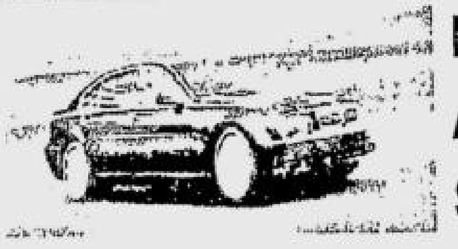

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Abu Sayyaf leader in Dos Palmas kidnapping, bomb attacks captured

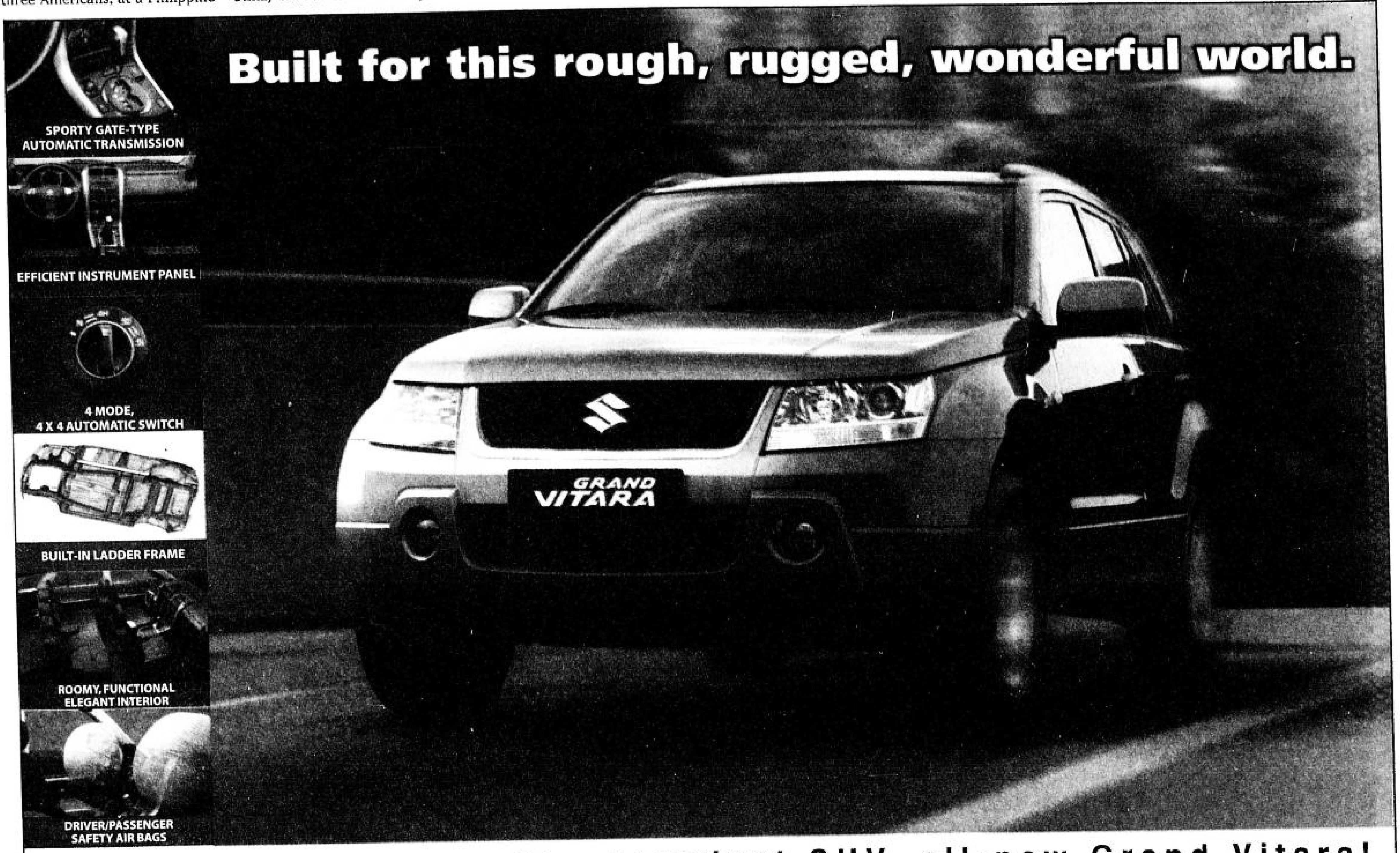
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE agents captured a suspected al-Qaida-linked militant accused in bombings and the 2001 kidnapping of 20 people, including three Americans, at a Philippine resort, the Army said yesterday.

Sharie Amiruddin, an alleged member of the Abu Sayyaf Muslim rebel group who also is known by his nom de guerre Abu Omar, was arrested Monday in Zamboanga City and was in police custody, army spokesman Maj. Bartolome Bacarro said.

Warrants for Amiruddin's arrest have been issued for his alleged role in 13 counts of kidnapping Jolo and Basilan, where the Abu Sayyaf has an active presence, Bacarro said.

Amiruddin also has been linked to bomb attacks in Jolo and in Zamboanga and Cotabato cities. He allegedly helped plan the 2001 kidnapping of 17 Filipinos and three Americans from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan, Bacarro said.

One of the Americans, Guillermo Sobero of Corona, California, was beheaded. American missionary Martin Burnham of Wichita, Kansas, was killed during an army commando rescue mission a year later in which his wife, Gracia, was wounded and recovered. *AP*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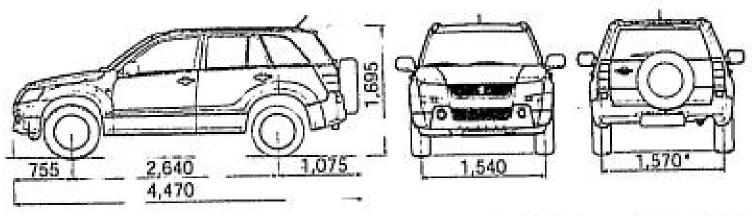

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No Need to Panic over High Oil Prices

Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) urges the public not to panic over increasing oil prices.

1. Oil prices are volatile due to the current tensions in Iran, Iraq, and Nigeria. Prices have reached a high of $79 a barrel for sweet crude and $92.13 per barrel for MOPS diesel (Singapore) due to increased demand.
2. During the summer months, gasoline prices will increase because the US refineries can only process the expensive sweet crude primarily coming from Nigeria and Venezuela.

COPW APPEALS TO LOCAL CONSUMERS NOT TO PANIC.

1. **The Philippines' two major oil refiners, Petron and Shell, use the CHEAPER Dubai heavy crude and NOT sweet crude.**

   Dubai crude averaged $63.32 per barrel as of April 21, an increase of JUST $5.40 from the March average of $57.82 per barrel.
2. **The government and the oil companies can work together as a team to cushion the effects of oil price increases.**

COPW had discussions with DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla and LTFRB Chairperson Elena Bautista and has submitted these proposals to President GMA:

1. ***LOWER the tariff from 3% to 1% on crude oil to be refined ONLY for the transport sector.*** This reduction should be effective ONLY up to July in order to minimize revenue losses of the government.
2. COPW will assist LTFRB Chairperson Elena Bautista in identifying qualified entrepreneurs who will establish refilling stations with pumps and storage capacity for diesel, gasoline, LPG, and compressed natural gas (CNG). Similar to what the big bus terminals do, the LTFRB will purchase the necessary fuels at wholesale price and make them available to said entrepreneurs. The government has already allocated P300 million for this micro-financing project.
3. The DOE and the CNG producers must enlighten the transport sector and the COPW on, FIRST, the technical requirements of transporting CNG to the Mamplasan daughter station and, SECOND, how the CNG will be transported to the refilling stations of the transport sector. There are currently 22 CNG buses in-country but with no CNG supply.
4. The Mindanao and Visayas transport sector using multi-cab (mini-jitney) and taxi operators nationwide have taken the initiative of requesting LTFRB Chair Bautista that they will convert their gas engines to LPG with a payback of less than 1 month. LPG on a per liter price equivalent is P16 cheaper than unleaded gas.
5. ***PNOC, which owns 40% of Petron, should request the DOE to ask Saudi Aramco, Petron's co-owner, to grant a special price for diesel ONLY to the public transport sector.*** This will minimize the subsidy that PNOC will incur from its share of Petron's net income which was a record P6 billion last year.
6. The DOE will arrange for the new players who import fuel at very high prices to purchase from Petron and Shell to avail of lower fuel costs and at the same time save on tariff.
7. ***Oil companies must provide the DOE-DOJ Task Force the basis for their price increases 24 HOURS BEFORE INCREASES ARE IMPLEMENTED.*** This is stated in the Oil Deregulation Law and must be strictly enforced.
8. In this time of volatile oil prices, ***there is a need, more than ever, for greater transparency on the part of the oil companies.*** They must provide accurate and updated data on inventory on hand and their actual costs. This is to avoid suspicions of opportunistic or manipulative pricing.

In adherence to its advocacy of improving the plight of Filipino consumers, COPW pledges to closely monitor the prices of basic goods and petroleum products.

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On a personal note, COPW Chairman Raul T. Concepcion assures everyone that he will continue to personally monitor all developments on oil price increases and Cha-Cha even as he leaves for a much-needed break to recharge.

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4 GIs face arrest if they fail to show up

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE FOUR AMERICAN servicemen accused of involvement in the rape of a Filipino woman in Subic Bay risked arrest if they failed to show up for their arraignment on Friday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday.

"If they do not appear, they would have violated their commitment (under) the Visiting Forces Agreement. Then the court can order their arrest. But whether their arrest order will succeed ... that's another story," Gonzalez told reporters.

The VFA is a Philippine-US military accord spelling out procedures for dealing with American troops violating Philippine laws.

Ordering the arrest people who do not show up in arraignments is the next legal step that can be taken in such situations, Gonzalez said.

But Gonzalez also noted that United States officials had made it clear that they would "fully cooperate in every step of the proceedings."

He said there was no reason for the Americans not to appear at their arraignment scheduled for April 28 at the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139.

He said the accused servicemen had been staying at the US Embassy in Manila, which is a relatively short drive from Makati.

Gonzalez also said he expected Judge Benjamin Pozon to rule, before the arraignment, on the government's amended complaint downgrading the charges against three of the four Americans.

In the amended complaint, only Lance Corporal Daniel Smith was kept as principal accused. The three others, Staff Sergeant Chad Brian Carpentier and Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis, were downgraded to accessories to the crime.

If the court will not rule on the amendment before the arraignment, then the three will be arraigned also as principals, Gonzalez said.

Correction

IN THE APRIL 17 issue, a story on Page A11—"Ulap joins initiative petition"—misspelled the name of the Albay vice governor. The correct spelling of the vice governor's name is James Calisin—not Calinisin. The same story also misstated Calisin's position in the Vice Governors' League of the Philippines. He is the league's national chairman of the board—not its president.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Why police junked Gringo wanted posters

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE DECISION TO JUNK "WANTED" posters offering a total of P8 million in prizes on the heads of former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and six other people linked to the Oakwood mutiny shows that the Philippine National Police (PNP) is "beginning to become sensitive to criticisms" that such a campaign violates human rights, a top police executive said yesterday.

Police Director Marcelo Ele said there were two views within the PNP on the use of the "rogues gallery" posters. The first is that it violates human rights, the second, that it helps police catch fugitives from justice.

"The Philippine National Police tends to follow the first view," said Ele, chief of the PNP's Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management.

The plan to distribute the "rogues gallery" posters was first disclosed by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who said it was President Macapagal-Arroyo's idea. It was widely criticized by human rights organizations, lawyers' groups and clergymen.

As Ele described it, the plan called for the distribution of some 3,000 posters with pictures of Honasan and the six others—Felix Turingan, Virgilio Briones, Romeo Lazo, Ernesto Macahiya, George Duldulao, and Lina Reyes—who were charged last month with coup d'etat for their alleged involvement in the Oakwood mutiny in Makati three years ago.

P5-M bounty

The posters would have offered a P5-million bounty on Honasan and a total of P3 million on the heads of the other six.

In the end, the PNP decided to junk the plan, Ele said, adding that the police "champion human rights."

Nonetheless, the police reserve the right to use posters, Ele said.

Once an arrest warrant is issued by a court, the PNP has the "right to use posters and other information materials to help the police account for these wanted persons," he added.

Told that a Makati court had issued warrants for Honasan and the others, Ele replied that the use of the posters "may not be necessary at the moment" because the police had networks of information.

During the forum, police officials also said they would take into custody the "Batasan 5"—assuming the court where they were charged with rebellion issues a warrant for their arrest.

Sr. Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, the PNP's spokesman, had earlier explained that the placing of Representatives Satur Ocampo, Liza Maza, Joel Virador, Rafael Mariano, and Teodoro Casino under the care of the Speaker of the House was an arrangement between the legislative and executive branches of government.

An arrest order from the judiciary, the third branch of government, would have to be implemented by the police, according to Pagdilao.

Asked to rate their efforts to track down the elusive Honasan, a veteran of several attempts to overthrow the Aquino administration in the 1980s, another police officer said the fact that cops rushed to the Manila Hotel on Monday following reports the former senator would be there showed that the police took information about him seriously.

A man did show up looking like Honasan at the regular Kapihan breakfast forum, but it was the well-known impersonator and comedian Willie Nepomuceno.

"You have to realize that all information pertaining to the manhunt for Sen. Gringo Honasan is being given due attention," said Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, deputy director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

"If you you ask to rate our efforts (to catch him) from zero to 10, our efforts is 10," he added.

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Nepali king bows to people power

From page A1

country, however, does not seem to be over yet. Maoist rebels, who control large swathes of the countryside, denounced the king's speech as a sham.

The seven parties, which have led nearly three weeks of a crippling campaign against the monarchy, named former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, 84, as their choice to head a new government.

The opposition alliance said the first job of the new government would be to ensure the Maoists, who have been fighting a decade-long rebellion, joined the political mainstream. Koirala, a veteran politician, could not immediately be reached for comment.

Maoist leader

But Maoist leader Prachanda said that the opposition alliance had committed "another historic mistake" and encouraged the people to continue their protests until the parties declared elections for an assembly to write a new constitution.

"The proclamation is a sham and a conspiracy against the Nepali people," Prachanda said in a statement. "Our party firmly rejects this."

He also called for a blockade of Katmandu, a city of 1.5 million people, and district capitals.

It remained unclear just what the split between the Maoists and the parties would mean.

Earlier, the seven parties called off their protest campaign.

"Today's planned protest has been converted into a victory rally. This will go down in history as a new example of how peaceful protests are held. This will determine the future of the country," said Krishna Prasad Sitaula, spokesperson for the Nepali Congress, the largest party in the alliance.

Returning to normal

Much of the demonstrators' anger near the palace seemed to be aimed at Home Minister Kamal Thapa, whom they blamed for a harsh crackdown on the protest campaign.

"Hang Kamal Thapa, destroy the monarchy," the demonstrators shouted. At least 12 people have been killed and thousands wounded in police action against protesters in the campaign.

Alongside the rallies, life began to return to normal in Katmandu after almost three weeks of curfew, protests and shop closures. Shops were open and many buses and taxis were running for the first time since April 6. Mobile phone connections, which was cut at the height of the unrest on Saturday, were restored.

Constitution first priority

In a nod to the Maoists, with whom the seven parties have a loose alliance, Sitaula said work on an assembly to write a new constitution would be the first priority. The move would likely result in a reduction of the power of the king, or even eliminate the monarchy.

"We have forced the king to his knees," said Rajan Sreshta, an opposition activist waiting outside Tuesday's alliance meeting. "It shows the people are the actual power."

Wooing Maoists

Minendra Rijal, another alliance leader, said: "We will be doing all we can to bring Maoists to the mainstream of peace and democracy. Now we have to create an environment for an interim government that will have Maoist participation."

The Maoists have been trying to end the monarchy and establish a communist republic. More than 13,000 people have died in the insurgency since 1996.

Nepal's parliament has been dissolved since 2002, and Gyanendra assumed absolute power last year, declaring a state of emergency and vowing to crush the escalating Maoist rebellion.

Speaking on national television late on Monday, the king said he was calling back the assembly.

Gyanendra also expressed his sympathies for those killed. "We extend our heartfelt condolences for all those who have lost their lives in the people's movement," he said in his speech.

Celebrations

Impromptu victory celebrations erupted in Kathmandu and in other towns almost immediately.

"This victory is the people's victory, long live democracy," hundreds chanted on the streets, whistling and cheering.

The United States welcomed the move and urged a "ceremonial role" for the king.

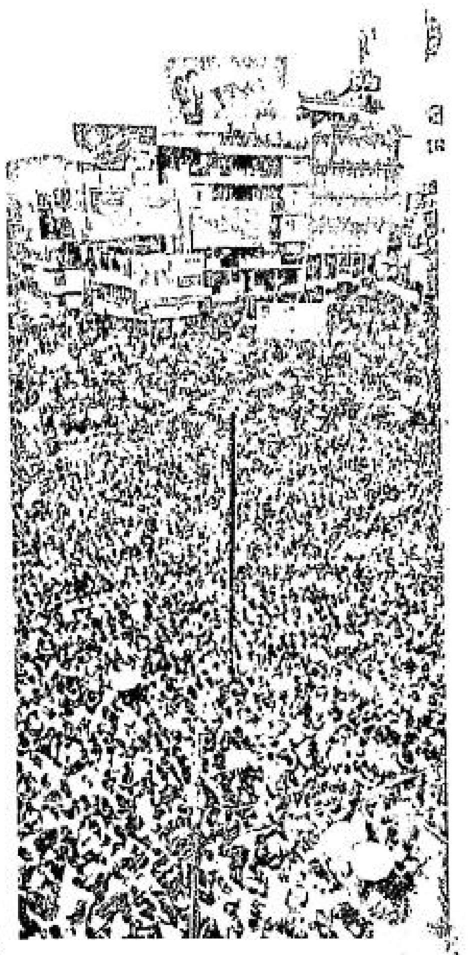
Gyanendra offered last week to give power to a prime minister nominated by the seven parties, but they said this was not enough. Monday's address went further in content and in tone.

The king said he was reconvening parliament, "convinced that the source of state authority and sovereignty of the kingdom of Nepal is inherent in the people of Nepal, and cognizant of the spirit of the ongoing people's movement."

Shocked

"For him to even acknowledge there was a people's movement, that really shocked me," said Kunda Dixit, editor of the Nepali Times.

"People Power Wins," the newspaper Katmandu Post blared in enormous letters at the top of its Tuesday edition. *Reports from Reuters and AP*



THOUSANDS attend a public meeting on the western edge of Katmandu, Nepal's capital, after the king listened to the people's voice and said he was restoring parliament. AP

Erap, Ping tagged coconspirators in US spy case

From page A1

the report first.

Investigation widening

Monday's hearing before Senior US District Judge William Walls came amid other signs the investigation has widened.

Last week, FBI agents in Florida arrested Cesar Mancao, on a material witness warrant and are expected to bring him this week before a grand jury in Newark.

Mancao is a former Philippine National Police superintendent who left the country in 2001 after being implicated in several sensational killings. He used to work for Lacson who was then PNP chief.

Aragoncillo, who lived in south Jersey, was a one-time career Marine who worked in the offices of Vice Presidents Al Gore and Dick Cheney. He later took a job at the FBI and allegedly downloaded sensitive intelligence documents while working as an analyst at the Fort Monmouth Information Technology Center, the newspaper said.

Plea bargain

Records in the case say he is negotiating a plea deal.

The names of the political officials emerged as the court-appointed attorney for Aquino, the only person indicted so far, sought a judge's permission to depose the three men in the Philippines, the Star-Ledger reported.

Prosecutors have portrayed Aquino, a Lacson protégé and former high-ranking national police official, as a conduit between Aragoncillo and the opposition politicians. He faces charges of conspiring to pass classified information and acting as an unregistered foreign agent. He has been jailed without bail since September last year.

'Unwitting pawn'

His attorney, Mark Berman, contends Aquino was an unwitting pawn who may have passed information but did not know it was classified, according to the Star-Ledger.

Aquino, who was studying to be a nurse in New York when he was arrested, has been ruled indigent, so Berman sought court funding for the depositions. He told the judge each of the witnesses could be critical to Aquino's defense but are unlikely to voluntarily travel to the United States.

Estrada testimony

"If these three individuals testify truthfully, they will exculpate the defendant," Berman said, according to the Star-Ledger.

"Any overseas depositions would be videotaped and could be played for a jury at trial. Because they would entail questions from prosecutors and the defense, any such depositions could also give the defense an early glimpse of the government's case against Aquino," the newspaper said.

Buch, the prosecutor, opposed the move, arguing Berman had not confirmed the testimony is material to the case or that the witnesses wouldn't make the trip for Aquino, the newspaper said.

In a motion filed with the court, Buch described Estrada as Aquino's godfather and Lacson as his longtime mentor, it said.

Berman said his calls and emails to Lacson had been unanswered, and that he didn't know how to reach Estrada.

Snowball's chance

Estrada is under house arrest in his resthouse in Tanay, Rizal, on plunder charges.

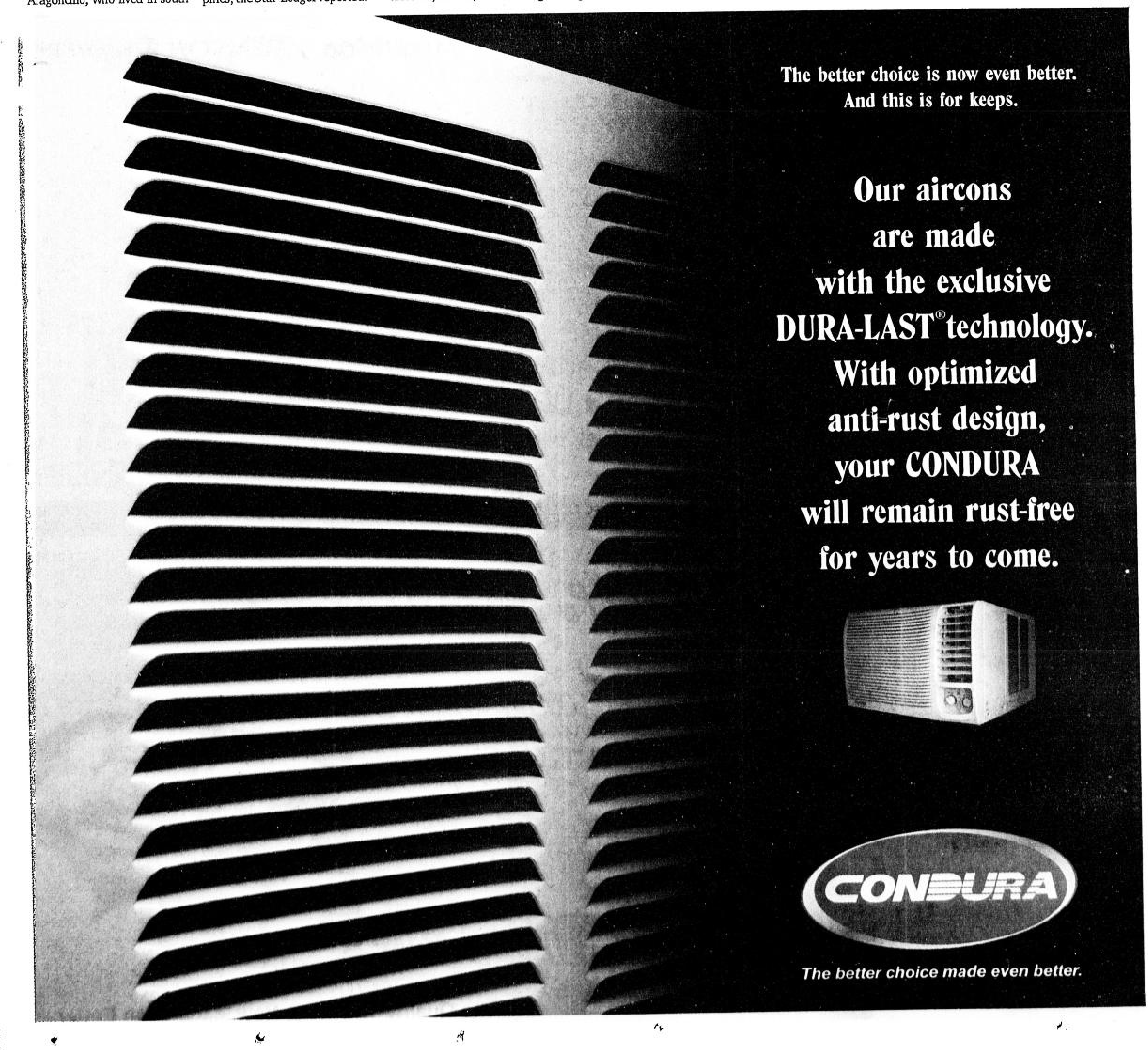
Berman, according to the newspaper, said that the odds were slim that any of the prospective witnesses would risk arrest in the United States.

"Have you ever heard that expression, 'a snowball's chance'?" he asked the prosecutor.

Still, Walls gave Berman one month to bolster his argument that the depositions would materially affect the defense case. And he cautioned Berman that even if he approves the travel, Aquino won't make the trip.

"I will not permit him to leave the country," the judge said, according to the report.

The parties are expected to return to court on May 23.



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Gonzalez orders Probe probe

By Leila Salaverria and Tarra Quismundo

JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez yesterday directed the National Bureau of Investigation to secure a copy of The Probe Team's interview with fugitive soldier 1st Lt. Sonny Sarmiento.

Gonzalez said he wanted to study the tape of the interview, aired last week on ABS-CBN, to find out if someone could be held liable for it.

In his memorandum to the NBI, the justice secretary said "threats against the government and clearly seditious statements were discussed" by Sarmiento during his interview with The Probe Team's Che-Che Lazaro.

"Ms Lazaro may have encouraged the rebel soldiers to pursue their illegal activities against the government," Gonzalez said.

Aside from getting a copy of the interview, he also directed the NBI to coordinate with the National Telecommunications Commission to find out if broadcast violations were committed. The NTC regulates the TV networks' use of the airwaves.

When asked if a network could be held liable for interviewing fugitive soldiers, Gonzalez said: "We're going to study it."

Sarmiento was involved in the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny, and a member of the Makabayang Kawal Pilipino. He escaped from detention at Army headquarters in Taguig in January this year.

In his interview with the Probe Team, he reportedly said he would continue with plans to overhaul the government.

Gonzalez said Sarmiento discussed plans of the rebel troops. "That is like using ABS-CBN to propagate the cause of the rebels."

Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, on the other hand, was on "silent mode" during the Magdalo coup d'etat trial yesterday at Branch 148 of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Trillanes showed up after missing hearings since February, along with 17 of his detained co-accused and two others who have been out on bail.

Hocheng Philippines Corp., one of the country's leading manufacturers of bathroom fixtures, recently signed its corporate healthcare agreement with MEDICard Philippines. (seated L-R) MEDICard's Luis S. Montoya (EVP & GM) and Dr. Nicanor D. Montoya (President) with Hocheng's Judy Geregale (Asst. VP for Admin. & Finance), Dinah Sumia (LMC Committee Head, Benefits & Welfare) and Rizalito Mercado (Chairman, LMC Steering Committee). (standing L-R) MEDICard's Dr. Voltaire R. Victoria (Sales & Business Dev't. Mngr.), Robert T. Chainani (Sr. Membership Consultant) and Cyrene Ramos (Mktg. Asst.) with Hocheng's Isagani Pascacio (LMC Secretariat), Imee Iloco (AUC, HR & Recruitment) and Bong Catimon (LMC Committee Head, Benefits & Welfare).

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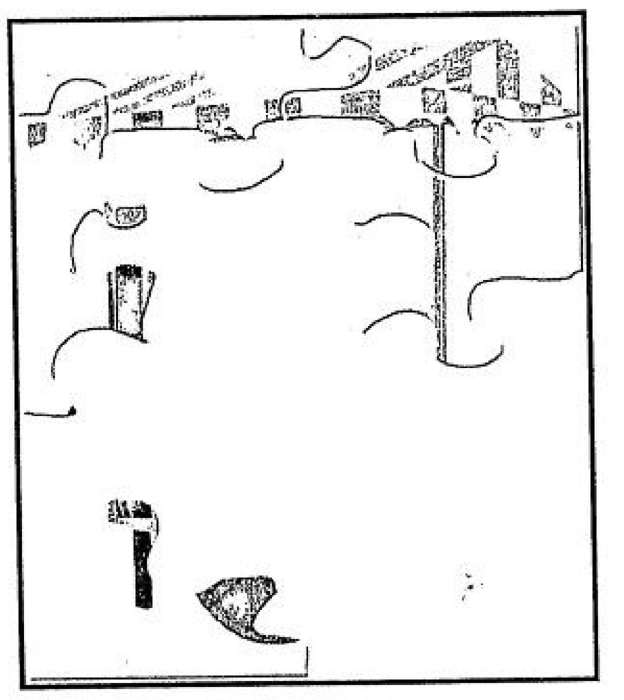

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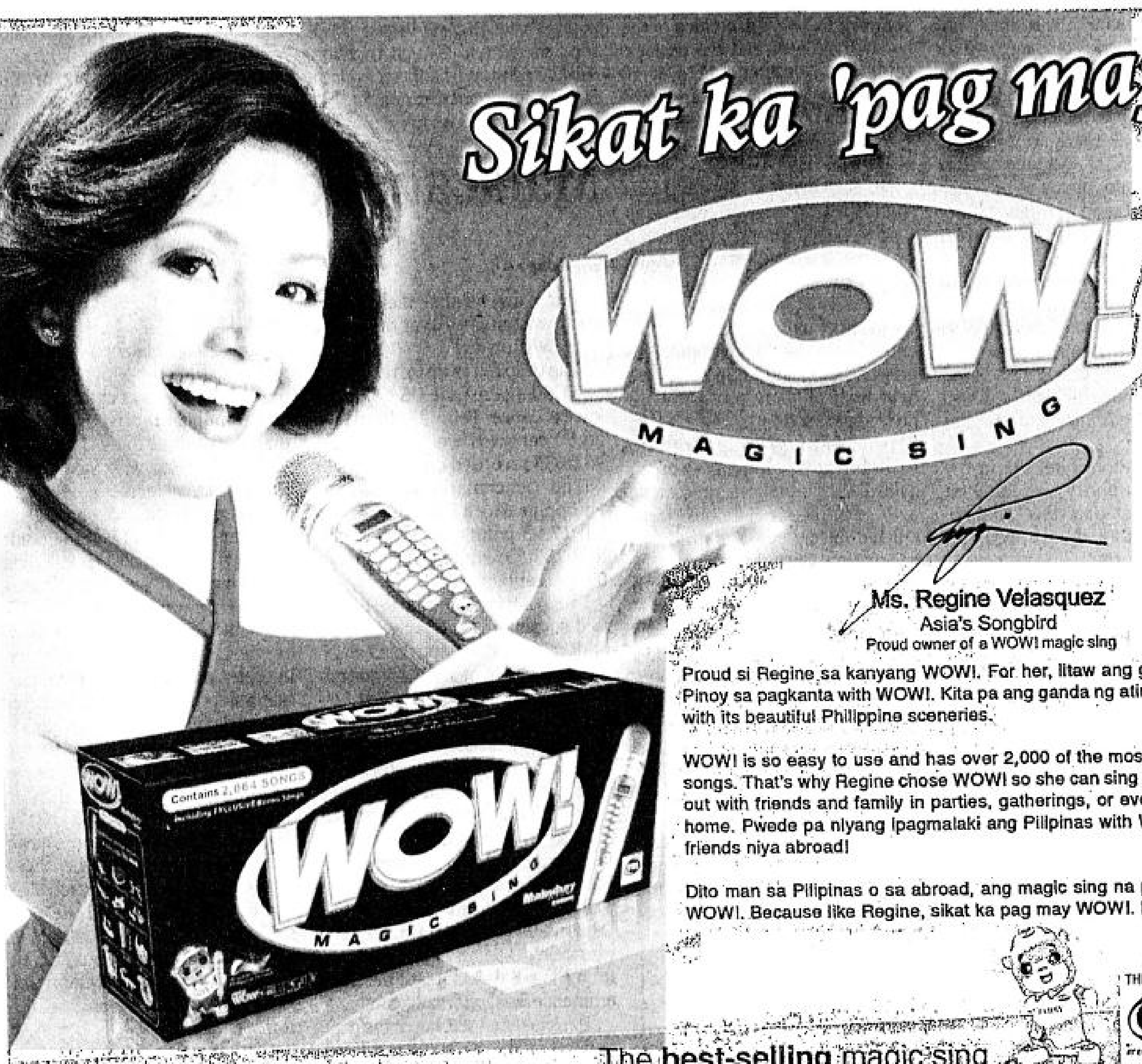

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Faith defenders turn 'converts' to 'reverts'

From page A1

believers, has been quietly bringing back erstwhile Catholics to their original faith, turning them from "converts" to "reverts."

Helping priests

Founder Henry Siy and his friends took it upon themselves to work to invite Catholics back, noting that priests and the rest of the Church hierarchy just couldn't do the job by themselves.

To their mind, it was simply impossible for a priest tending to a flock of thousands to address questions individually, preferably in a way applicable to a particular experience.

"Our goal really is to make good Catholics become better Catholics and bring back those who had strayed to other faiths," Siy, 52, told the INQUIRER in an interview last week.

The task may seem attractive to critics who think that Defensores Fides ("Defenders of the Faith" in Latin) is just trying to pass itself off as a group of self-appointed "experts," much like the Council on Philippine Affairs in the secular world.

Many Catholics believe in the blanket authority of priests, meaning that only the ordained ones could and should speak on matters of faith.

"That's the problem with many of us. We put everything on the shoulders of priests," Siy complained. "Worse, we rest our faith solely on priests and we focus on rituals. We are what they call 'sacramentalized but not evangelized.'"

Apologetics

Defensores provides help in apologetics, a branch of theology dealing with the defense of the truth of Christian doctrines.

In inviting Catholics back, the group depends primarily on the words of the Apostle Peter, the Church's first Pope. "Always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you for a reason regarding the hope that is in you, yet answer with gentleness and reverence," Siy said.

A look at the members' resumés would lead one to a dental clinic, a golf course, bank and an audio-visual room.

Siy, for instance, is a management consultant in the chemical industry.

It was simply common devotion to the Christian faith that brought them together in a small Catholic bookstore, Totus, which was started by Siy six years ago.

He invited a handful of regular customers to one gathering, initially meant to give him an idea of the books they liked and the ones he could sell. Not long after, they all decided to become an organized "defenders of the faith."

Catholic literature

No clergymen, Siy and his friends rely heavily on their deep Catholic backgrounds, reinforced by voracious reading of Catholic literature, for the difficult job ahead.

"Most of us have backgrounds enough for us to give talks to priests," he said. "Because we have read so many books, we are no longer fazed."

Defensores gives priority to Catholics now belonging to evangelical denominations, not those who embraced religions very much different in foundation and beliefs from Catholicism.

Some Catholics leave the faith not always for the right reasons.

One, for instance, decided to become a Born Again Christian after seeing the liveliness of the fellowship. He didn't see that in the Catholic Mass, a central ritual bashers claim shouldn't be called a eucharistic "celebration" at all.

'Smell of teen spirit'

The man who embraced Mormonism nearly a decade ago blamed his decision on what grunge music followers in the '90s came to know as the "smell of teen spirit."

"I was 18 and was aggressive," he told the INQUIRER. "I was asking why I was never given the opportunity to choose my own religion, why it was imposed on me at birth."

Now a writer for a Manila newspaper, he soon returned to Catholicism, convinced that whatever it was he was looking for, he couldn't find as a follower of Joseph Smith.

Smith is the founder of the Mormon faith or the Church of the Latter-Day Saints.

People like him are the main concern of Defensores' advocacy done mainly through lessons in apologetics.

The group offers nine to 12 courses covering the sacred Scripture, sacred and Church tradition, salvation history, the Blessed Mother, the papacy and Christology.

In a way, Siy said his group was trying to equip Catholics with something they could use when confronted by others.

How to respond

"Many of us have a deep faith but it stops there. We no longer know how to respond if we're asked to defend it," he said.

Catholics are usually confronted by issues like idolatry (because they supposedly venerate statues of saints), and the Inquisition and the burning of witches (because the Church supposedly was once on a murderous rampage), he said.

Some go to the extent of calling Catholicism an obstacle to development, noting that many of the poor countries are predominantly Catholic, he said.

"What many people don't understand is that Catholicism is often accused of something which is not part of its teachings," he said.

The lone dissenter in the Port Area government office whose fellow employees decided to become "born again" had once sought help from Defensores.

Siy and a friend sat down with him for nearly two hours, responding to questions bothering his believing but doctrinally ill-equipped mind. Soon he found himself defending his faith and even convincing one of his coworkers to return to it.

Others, like the lama, found the way back to Catholicism via a different route.

One day, while listening to a John Michael Talbot song about Matthew 6:33 ("But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"), he felt God was communicating to him.

"He felt a sudden rush within him," said Siy, who attended a seminar with the lama.

A devotee of St. Francis of Assisi and St. John of the Cross, the lama, who once built Buddhist centers in the country, returned to where his faith began. He is now a Third Order Carmelite.

Malacañang backtracks on lifting of 12% oil VAT

From page A1

terday on news that the government was mulling over the lifting of the VAT on oil.

The peso fell to an intraday low of 51.90 against the US dollar, its lowest since Feb. 28 It closed 26.50 centavos weaker than the P51.635 recorded on Monday.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 17.93 points, or 0.8 percent, to 2,232.55, adding to Monday's 0.6-percent loss.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said suspending the tax would be Malacañang's last option to cushion the impact of surging international oil prices on consumers.

"We prefer to ensure our long-term gains such as credibility in the international market rather than gaining in the short run. We'd rather stick to a less drastic response and be able to maintain our program of keeping the budget on an even keel," Bunye said at a briefing.

Bunye's statement came after the Department of Finance warned that exempting petroleum products from the tax would derail the government's fiscal reform agenda.

The expanded VAT law is the centerpiece of the government's fiscal reform program aimed at balancing the budget by 2008.

Inevitable

Bunye said Malacañang would rather reduce the 3-percent tariff on imported oil and expand subsidies to public transport operators than discontinue the VAT on oil.

But Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said it was inevitable the government would exercise the final option (suspend the VAT on oil) because crude oil prices were poised to revisit their record high of $88 per barrel during the Iran-Iraq war in 1984.

"A cut in the tariff is quite modest given the cumulative pain that the consumers are going through," said Salceda, an economic adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The lawmaker had called for the lifting of the VAT until crude prices settled at $65 a barrel.

In assessing the pros and cons of suspending the VAT on oil, Bunye said "we saw this was not beneficial to us, the revenue drain was too big."

A finance official said the government would lose P29 billion in revenue should the tax on oil be suspended and P2.5 billion for every 1-percentage point reduction in the tariff.

The official said the government would need to impose a tax of 60 centavos on every text message to compensate for any foregone revenue to be brought about by the lifting of VAT on oil.

The amount would be too much for the public to bear, according to the official.

Bunye said "alleviating the burden of high oil prices on the public must not be at the expanse of sound economic fundamentals that drive confidence, investments and jobs."

He said the economic managers frowned on the suspension of the tax on oil because it would betray the administration's fickle mindedness on a tax reform that it had lobbied arduously in Congress.

"There are many point of views but our finance people are really against the scrapping even on a temporary basis. We'd like to show resolve in solving our problems, but we don't want to send mixed signals to our investors," Bunye said.

Stick to fiscal reform

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. emphasized the importance of assuring the market that the government was committed to stick to its fiscal reform agenda, including the continued implementation of the the VAT Reform Law.

"A deviation will tend to be negative and can adversely affect financial markets," Tetangco told reporters.

He said the government should not put to waste significant progress in improving its fiscal position, and the resulting confidence of the market in the country's credit standing.

Social services

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said P22.7-billion worth of infrastructure projects, and basic and social services programmed for this year would depend on VAT revenues.

"If we give up the tax on oil, then we must be ready to give up many social and infrastructure projects," Andaya said in a statement.

He said that of the P22.7 billion, P1.6 billion was supposed to go to mass feeding program, P500 million to the training of public schoolteachers, P120 million to the establishment of public libraries, and P150 million to computers for public high schools, among other allocations.

The total amount represents 30 percent of the P75 billion in additional revenue expected this year from the VAT Reform Law.

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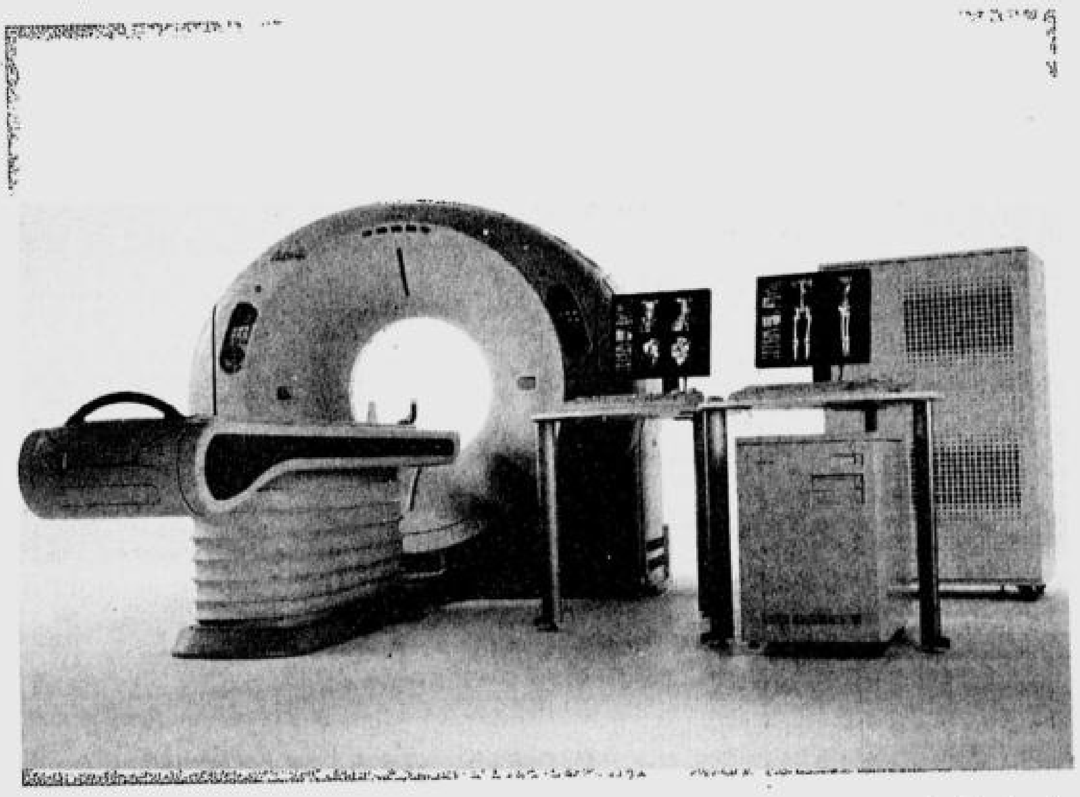

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Beltran transferred from PNP hospital to Heart Center

By Luige A. del Puerto

DETAINED PARTY-LIST REP. CRISPIN BELTRAN's long wait for proper medical treatment is finally over.

Two months after he was arrested on a 21-year-old warrant, Beltran left the Philippine National Police General Hospital in Camp Crame yesterday for the Philippine Heart Center, also in Quezon City, where he is to undergo a thorough medical check as he had requested.

Makati Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino, who will hear the rebellion case against Beltran, issued the transfer order on Monday.

Beltran left Camp Crame in an ambulance accompanied by his daughter, Olivia Lalusis, and a medical team from the PNP hospital.

Police officers in another car escorted the ambulance. His wife, Rosario, followed in the family van.

On the phone on the way to the PHC, Beltran sounded buoyant.

"I'm in my second phase of detention. This is going to provide me with a more relaxed atmosphere," he said.

"*Para kaming nabunutan ng isang tinik* (It's like a thorn has been removed)," his daughter Olivia said.

"Of course, there is still another thorn, and that is the rebellion charge, which is inhuman," she added.

Beltran remained defiant hours before his transfer, calling his PNP hospital room a "hell" that had depressed him.

"This is hell to me. I would like to be free," he said in a taped interview provided by his office.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group arrested Beltran on Feb. 24 as he was on the way to a picnic with his family. President Macapagal-Arroyo had placed the country under a state of national emergency on that day and Beltran was picked up on the strength of an arrest warrant for inciting to rebellion issued in October 1985 during the Marcos regime.

In detention, he was slapped with a rebellion charge by the PNP for his alleged role in a coup attempt on Feb. 24.

Last Monday, the charge was formalized by the Department of Justice and included five other party-list representatives who were also known leftists. They were Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño, Joel Virador, Liza Maza and Rafael Mariano. Forty-two others, including former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, were also charged.

Beltran, who suffers from hypertension and diabetes, had asked the court to order his transfer to a hospital of his choice because the PNP hospital did not have the facilities to treat him.

He also complained he was being given the wrong food for his condition.

In the taped interview, Beltran said if justice was "completely shut against us, I'd do everything to get out of this detention."

He said he longed to be with fellow workers during the celebration of Labor Day on May 1.

Even from detention, he said, he would be there through his "voice," meaning a taped message. *With Melissa de Quiros*

Batasan 6 ask court to dismiss rebellion charges

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE SIX MILITANT PARTY-LIST LAWMAKERS charged by the government with rebellion have asked the court hearing their case to reject the criminal information against them and 42 other co-accused, citing the lack of due process and evidence to bring them to trial.

Just hours after the Department of Justice announced the filing of charges against Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño, Joel Virador, Liza Maza, Rafael Mariano and Crispin Beltran and the others, the six filed a motion asking the Makati Regional Trial Court, Branch 137, to declare the criminal case filed against them null and void.

"The amended information is null and void and should be stricken off the record as a blatant violation of the right to due process ... Displaying gross ignorance of the law and established jurisprudence and an obvious mania to persecute their innocent victims, the [prosecution] would want to impose their patently baseless findings of probable cause upon this honorable court," said the motion filed Monday afternoon by the lawyers of the six from the Public Interest Law Center.

After a preliminary investigation, a seven-member DOJ panel found probable cause to charge the six—and former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, rebel junior military officers, leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines and "several John and Jane Does"—for their roles in a supposed conspiracy to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo. The DOJ alleged the power grab involved an attack on Malacañang.

The lawmakers' motion said the DOJ showed "extreme bias" in handling the case, as it "disregarded the constitutional guarantees of due process and trampled upon the rights of the accused" as it "embarked on a manipulative scheme to achieve narrow partisan goals."

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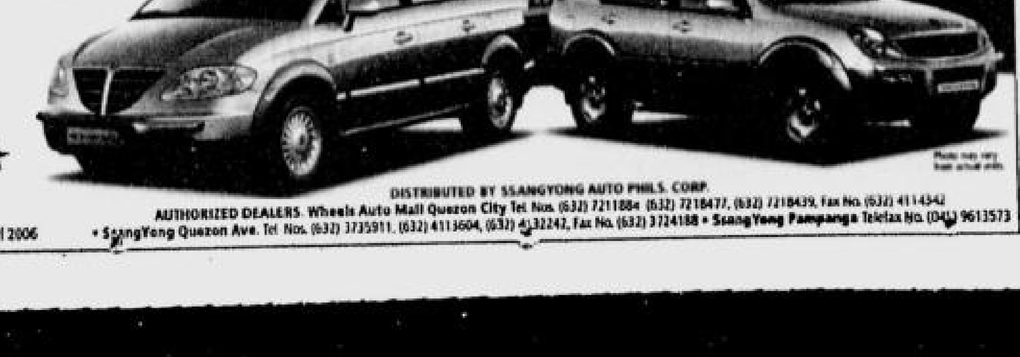

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I'm not sorry, says GMA's Cavite State U heckler

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—I AM not sorry.

The student who heckled President Macapagal-Arroyo during last week's graduation rites at the Cavite State University (CavSU) in Indang, Cavite, yesterday said she had no regrets over what she did.

Maria Theresa Pangilinan, a mass communications graduate, said that given another chance at another venue, she would heckle Ms Arroyo again and unfurl a streamer calling for her ouster.

"*Wala po akong pinagsisihan. Bakit naman po ako magsisi?* (I am not sorry for what I did. Why should I feel sorry?) What I did was right. Most of the people (in the crowd) feel the way I do but, maybe, they were just afraid to express their opinions," Pangilinan told the INQUIRER.

"It just so happened that I was the one who first voiced out what I felt and displayed the streamer I was holding," she said. "Fighting for truth and justice does not require certain places or events."

Pangilinan was one of at least seven protesters who raised "No to Cha-cha" and "Oust GMA" banners while the President was delivering her speech before the 1,159 graduating students of CavSU.

Ms Arroyo paused for about a minute, gave the hecklers a blank stare and continued her speech.

The incident caught members of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) and local police flat-footed.

The PSG and police tried to stop Pangilinan from receiving her diploma from the President on stage. She was eventually allowed to go up and join her classmates while the other protesters were picked off from the crowd by the policemen and PSG.

Boring speech

Besides, Pangilinan said, except for the P50-million fund for the university, there was nothing new in Ms Arroyo' speech.

"It (the speech) was rather boring. How many times have we heard her promise new graduates employment and better opportunities? Until now, many graduates remain unemployed," she said.

She said most members of the graduating class were not sure if they could land jobs commensurate with their college degrees.

Pangilinan is no ordinary student activist.

Before graduation, she was the president of the Central Student Government and a member of the Board of Regents, the highest policy-making body of the university, as student representative.

She was also a writer for the Gazette, CavSU's student publication, and regional chair of the National Union of Students of the Philippines in Southern Tagalog.

Right to be heard

Pangilinan said that although surprised, her parents and other relatives who came to witness her graduation supported her and respected what she did.

"They understood the reasons for my actions," she said.

Pangilinan, however, admitted that she was affected by the incident which, she said, caused her to limit her activities.

She said she was also aware of the varied reactions of her friends, professors, university officials and even the media.

She lamented how several government officials described what the protesters did as disrespecting the President.

"Before they accuse us of disrespect, they should first tell that to Ms Arroyo who blatantly showed disregard for the people's vote by cheating in the last election," Pangilinan said.

"*Hindi naman pò pambabastos yung ginawa ko* (I was not showing disrespect). I have my right to speak and be heard. *Kung pambabastos ang tawag sa pagtatanggol sa katotohanan, tawagin na nila akong bastos* (They can call me uncouth if they believe it is disrespectful to stand up for what is true)," she said.

Persona non grata

Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Calabarzon police director, said the Indang police had already filed a case of alarm and scandal against Pangilinan, graduate Apolinario Dayang-dayang and other members of the Solidarity of Cavite Workers.

"It is customary for Filipinos to respect the guest at any event. What the students did only reflected how their university has taught them," Noble said.

Pangilinan said she was also told that university officials had decided to pass a resolution declaring her persona non grata at her alma mater.

"I couldn't care less. I did nothing wrong to insult the university," she said.

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Gonzalez orders NBI to investigate graduate

From page A1

Cavite State University in Indang, Cavite, last week.

Gonzalez ordered an investigation of mass communications graduate Maria Theresa Pangilinan who heckled Ms Arroyo as she was delivering her commencement address.

In a memorandum, he also directed the National Bureau of Investigation to identify the other people who had raised banners calling for Ms Arroyo to step down, determine the possible involvement of university officials in the incident, and to find out how the protesters were able to enter the school premises.

Interview reporters

"Gather information and sufficient evidence for the possible filing of charges against those persons," Gonzalez said.

He also directed the NBI to interview INQUIRER reporters Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Marlon Ramos and Philippine Star reporter Aurea Calica in the course of their investigation.

The heckling incident took place last Saturday as the President was delivering her speech at the CavSU graduation. Pangilinan then stood up and shouted "*Patalsikin si* (Oust) Gloria" and unfurled a banner declaring "No to Cha-cha."

Moments later, several people belonging to the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and the Solidarity of Cavite Workers also held up banners calling for the President to step down. They shouted their demand for Ms Arroyo's ouster as they were being led by the Presidential Security Group out of the venue.

Gonzalez said he was not asked by the President to order the investigation, but that he did it on his own initiative.

"As far as I'm concerned, a crime was committed," he told reporters.

He said the protesters violated Article 153 of the Revised Penal Code, which penalizes those who "cause any serious disturbance in a public place, office, or establishment, or shall interrupt or disturb public performances, functions or gatherings, or peaceful meetings."

Other violations

Gonzalez said the protesters also violated Article 154, which penalizes those "who by the same means, or by words, utterances or speeches shall encourage disobedience to the law or to the constituted authorities or praise, justify or extol any act punished by law."

He said the offenses carried a penalty of six months to two years in prison.

Gonzalez also said the presence of Ms Arroyo at the graduation rites aggravated any criminal liability.

He said one of the aggravating circumstance listed under Article 14 was "that the crime be committed in the palace of the Chief Executive or in his presence, or where public authorities are engaged in the discharge of their duties."

Gonzalez was not the first of the President's men to come to her aid after the heckling incident.

The President's Chief of Staff Michael Defensor earlier said there was a need for the PSG to tighten security.

He also said the university's officials were to blame for the heckling since they were the ones who invited Ms Arroyo to be their guest.

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SC Chief Justice: Death penalty . . .

From page A1

ment. Malacañang said roughly 1,000 death convicts were expected to benefit.

Some groups assailed Ms Arroyo's decision as contrary to law for being a "wholesale commutation."

Relatives of victims of heinous crimes also criticized the President, who has certified to Congress as urgent a bill that would scrap the death penalty law.

Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico said Panganiban should have been more prudent.

"A statement of the Chief Justice is not the decision of the entire court," Suplico said in an interview.

Panganiban defended

"At this point in time, it is better for the Chief Justice to shut up because the issue of the death penalty may reach the Supreme Court and he will be asked to decide on something that he has previously spoken about. That will put the Chief Justice on the spot."

Deputy Majority Leader Edcel Lagman, who is leading efforts in Congress to abolish the death penalty, defended Panganiban, saying the Chief Justice had consistently opposed the law as unconstitutional.

"So there's nothing new here," he said.

Lagman recalled that in a January 1999 Supreme Court ruling on the case of convicted rapist Leo Echegaray, who was eventually executed, Panganiban pointed out in a separate opinion that the death penalty was unconstitutional because Congress failed to cite the "compelling reason" to justify its restoration.

No prejudging

"What is important here is that he is only reiterating what he previously said. This is not to prejudge any subsequent case which may be brought to the Supreme Court," Lagman said.

"A justice should not be constrained from expressing his personal views in order to add information to a public debate," he added.

Lagman said he had long shared Panganiban's view that the law was legally deficient.

He said he and a handful of congressmen, who had opposed the restoration of the death penalty during previous Congresses, anchored their opposition on two principal grounds.

2 grounds

"There were no compelling reasons … to warrant the legislative restoration of the death penalty … and the death penalty is not a deterrent to the commission of heinous crimes," he said.

"The heinousness of capital offenses and rising criminality were not compelling reasons as required by the Constitution."

Lagman also said the odiousness of crimes punishable by death was not a compelling reason "because they were by their very nature already 'heinous' even before the abolition of the death penalty."

An "inconsistent" crime index also could not be used as a compelling reason to restore the death penalty, he said.

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RP maid in Singapore slay may yet escape death

SINGAPORE—A FILIPINA MAID FACING TRIAL over the death of a compatriot whose body was chopped up and left inside a bag will escape a possible death sentence after prosecutors reduced the murder charge against her, the woman's lawyer said yesterday.

Guen Aguilar could now be jailed for life if convicted after a trial to begin on May 15, lawyer Shashi Nathan said.

"Originally she faced a murder charge," Nathan told reporters after a preliminary inquiry at High Court. "The present charge is one for culpable homicide not amounting to murder. There is a possibility of a life sentence."

Nathan said he did not know why the charge had been altered but it was a huge relief for his client and he would work to convince the court that she should be sentenced to much less than life if convicted.

"Certainly the first thing we need to do is to tell the court that a life sentence would not be fair in this case and we have to show the court through our own arguments and submissions that a sentence below 10 years would be appropriate," he said.

The accused listened to the proceedings through an interpreter.

Aguilar, 29, a mother of two from Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, was arrested hours after the severed head and limbs of Jane Lapuebla, 26, were found inside a sports bag near a subway station at the Orchard Road shopping district last Sept. 9.

Lapuebla's torso was later found at a nature park. A native of Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya, Lapuebla was buried last Sept. 27 in the Nueva Vizcaya town of Bagabag where she had lived with her husband Crusaldo.

Nathan first said last October that he would not rule out seeking an amendment to the murder charge against Aguilar after his conversations with her gave the defense team a clearer picture of what may have transpired.

Another Filipina maid, Flor Contemplacion, was hanged in Singapore 10 years ago for the murder of another maid and a Singaporean boy.

Contemplacion's hanging strained bilateral ties, which have since improved.

About 150,000 women, many of them from the Philippines, work as maids in Singapore.

In Manila, the Department of Foreign Affairs tipped-off reporters earlier yesterday about the development in Singapore but later declined to issue an official statement. Spokesman Bert Asuque said the foreign office would continue monitoring the case. *AFP with Volt Contreras*

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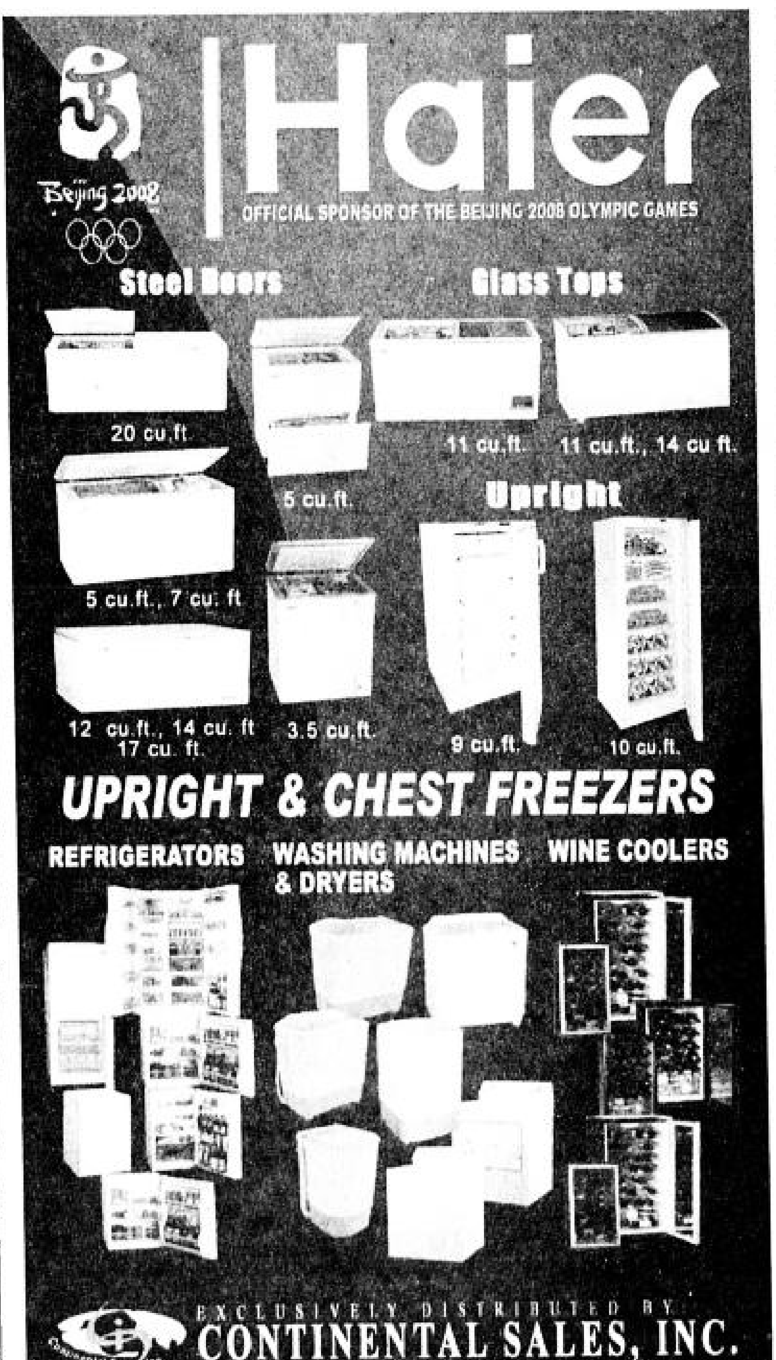

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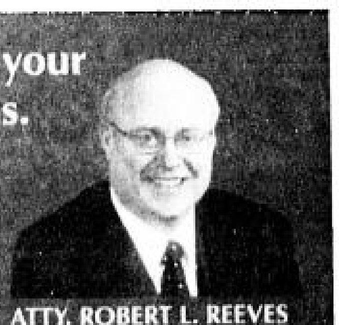

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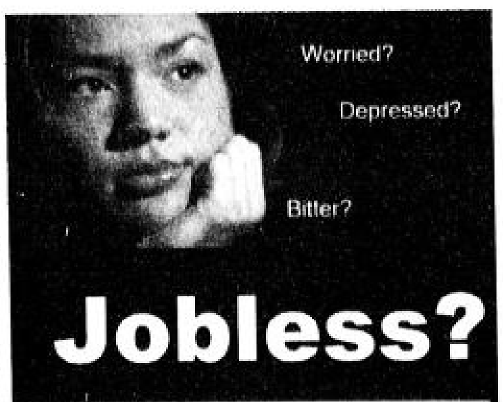

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Militants vow to reclaim streets; PNP to follow ruling

By TJ Burgonio, Blanche S. Rivera and Philip C. Tubeza

THERE WAS A MUTED RESPONSE from usually pugnacious Palace officials, a sigh of relief from victims of violent police dispersals and praise for the Supreme Court for standing up to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Leftist groups, which bore the brunt of police batons enforcing Ms Arroyo's "calibrated preemptive response" (CPR) policy, vowed to reclaim the streets, where scores of their followers had been arrested.

A huge May Day rally is being planned in the face of rising oil prices and stagnant salaries.

"We are deferring comment until we have received a copy and read the decision," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a text message after the Supreme Court announced its decision striking down Ms Arroyo's CPR.

The President's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, thanked the high court for its ruling. He said the court "not only upheld the right of groups to hold protest actions but also acknowledged the right of people who would be affected by the protest rallies."

Drop all pending charges

"The Supreme Court, being the highest tribunal, has already spoken," said Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police. "The decision forms part of the law of the land, so we have to follow it."

"It's positive that the CPR no longer exists and there will be freedom parks, but this may not be enough to stop abuses by the PNP. It might not stop violent dispersals," said Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) secretary general Renato Reyes Jr.

"All pending charges against the protesters under the CPR regime should be dropped now," Laban ng Masa chair Francisco Nemenzo Jr. said.

"It is time to reclaim Mendiola and the entire stretch of Recto Avenue. The Manila city government and police should give us the parliament of the streets or face charges in court," said Gerry Albert Corpuz of Pamalakaya.

"The Supreme Court has again raised the red flag on the limits of executive power under the Constitution by turning down the CPR," Sen. Joker Arroyo said in a statement.

Bill of rights sacrosanct

"Malacañang has been served notice that the Bill of Rights is sacrosanct and it should heed the signals being given by the high court," Arroyo said.

"It is some wonder why the executive has attempted to probe how far it can go in traducing the Constitution. The Supreme Court has sent the message, the Constitution is working. That augurs well for the country."

Sen. Richard Gordon said: "The Constitution cannot be trifled with. The President must be more circumspect in the exercise of her executive powers. She should not experiment with the people's rights which are inherent in the Constitution."

Kitchen getting hotter

"Kudos to the Supreme Court for upholding the rule of law and the Constitution. No question the kitchen is getting hotter for GMA. She should resign now before people take the law into their own hands," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said in a text message.

Court of last resort

"This is confirming and affirming that we can still rely upon the Supreme Court as a court of last resort in the resolution of controversies, especially political controversies. This bodes well for the country," Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said.

"Nobody is the victor here except the people. I give my soldierly salute to all the members of the Panganiban Supreme Court," he added.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal, who was hosed down by police during a protest in Mendiola, said: "Ms Arroyo has only herself to blame for her tyrannical policy. She is a tyrant on the losing streak. Strike two for GMA. The civil liberties of our people should never be sacrificed for political survival. I encourage our people to remain vigilant against a losing tyrant."

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said "those who were victimized by CPR either through physical abuse or arrests should start filing criminal and civil suits against their tormentors."

"I welcome the Supreme Court decision. I hope they eventually would do the same with the people's initiative," Sen. Ralph Recto said, referring to the mode being vigorously pursued by administration allies to amend the 1987 Constitution shift the government to a parliamentary system.

Wake-up call

"I hope that this will serve as a wake-up call for GMA in so far as her dictatorial tendencies are concerned," said House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

Escudero said the opposition was studying whether to include this case when it files another impeachment complaint against the President this year.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the Supreme Court was "correct" in voiding the CPR, adding that even the brightest lawyers could sometimes give "bum" advice.

"So, let's just follow the law to the letter and no need to litigate. Peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are guaranteed by law," he said.

No bugle call for anarchy

House Assistant Majority Leader Abraham Kahlil Mitra of Palawan joined the minority's celebration of the triumph of the rule of law. But he said it was not a "bugle call for anarchy."

"The state retains the power to defend itself when assaulted by evil forces who use democratic virtues to destroy democracy itself. The ruling is not a franchise to whip up a mob," said Mitra.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño said: "Our scoreboard shows it's 2-1: one for GMA for the national identification system and two for the people for CPR and EO 464. The ruling can only further embolden the people to demand the truth from her. The cultivated image is part of a cover-up relating to the Garci tapes," he said.

Let's show the Thais

Parañaque City Rep. Roilo Golez said the court decision allowed protests in the "magnitude, frequency and duration of the Bangkok marches" that recently forced Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to step down.

"Now, we should show the Thais that we, too, can defend democracy the way they did against Thaksin," he said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Luige A. del Puerto and Michael Lim Ubac*

Biazon to Palace …

From page A1

Garci tapes by (Press) Secretary (Ignacio) Bunye," he said at a briefing.

The senator, however, did not discount the possibility that rallies and demonstrations in Metro Manila on May 1 could "trigger a move from the armed services constituting a withdrawal of support."

"The threat from the armed services is the possibility of a withdrawal of support that can only be triggered by mass movements in the streets. And it seems that there is a great possibility that there could be mass movements in the streets," he said.

State of emergency

President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, had warned that Malacañang would not hesitate to reimpose a state of emergency if the May 1 rallies escalate into armed violence.

Ms Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 1017 and declared a state of national emergency on Feb. 24 after the military allegedly uncovered a plot by key officers to join protest marches that day and break away from the chain of command.

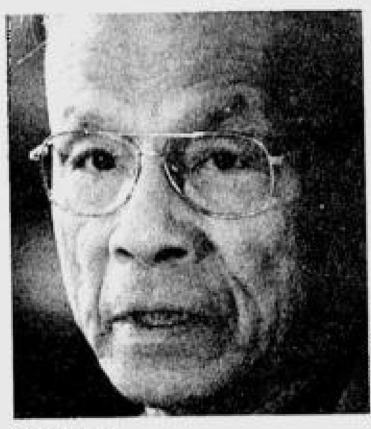
While the state of emergency was enforced for seven days, protesters, party-list lawmakers and perceived critics were arrested without warrants, and the office of a critical newspaper, The Daily Tribune, was raided.

Defensor's warning came on the heels of military intelligence reports that it had uncovered "Oplan 4G," an alleged leftist-rightist plot to mobilize up to half a million people for a march on the Palace on Labor Day, the fifth anniversary of the assault on Malacañang by supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

If at all, the Palace warning of a coup could be a mere cover for the issuance of a new measure to quell the expected massive street protests by labor groups on May 1, said Biazon, who chairs the Senate committee on national defense.

Psy-war

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) called the military's announcement of Oplan 4G a "desperate ploy to sabotage the upcoming May 1 rally."



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"Ms Arroyo's psy-war experts are working overtime to prevent people from coming out in protest," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes. "We can assure the public that the May 1 protest is not part of any coup plot or conspiracy."

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said he did not expect any untoward incidents on May 1.

While there were rumors some groups would try to take advantage of the occasion, Gonzales doubted they would succeed. "It's wishful thinking," he said.

He also expressed doubt that militant labor groups would be able to gather 20,000 people for their Labor Day rallies.

2,000 to be deployed

Bunye said the authorities were ready for any eventuality on May 1.

"We have laws to observe and if these laws are broken then the lawbreakers will have to answer the consequences," he said.

Director Vidal Querol, head of the Metro Manila police, said up to 2,000 police personnel would be deployed throughout Metro Manila on that day, with 3,000 more held in reserve.

The fringes of Malacañang will be off-limits to protesters. Querol said the police planned to barricade the avenues leading to Malacañang with container vans, a strategy that was successfully employed during Ms Arroyo's State of the Nation Address last year.

But he expressed concern that no groups had as yet applied for rally permits.

"They're running out of time," Querol said. Protesters had defied the police before by taking to the streets without rally permits.

SC rules Palace ban on rallies is illegal

From page A1

do Ermita, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and the Philippine National Police to refrain from using CPR and instead strictly observe the requirements of "maximum tolerance."

"CPR serves no valid purpose if it means the same thing as maximum tolerance and is illegal if it means something else," the decision said. "Accordingly, what is to be followed is and should be that mandated by the law itself, namely, maximum tolerance."

BP 880 valid

The high court upheld the validity of Batas Pambansa Blg. 880 and dismissed the petitions by leftwing groups led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) to have the measure issued during Ferdinand Marcos' martial law regime be likewise declared void.

Under BP 880, maximum tolerance means the "highest degree of restraint that the military, police and other peacekeeping authorities shall observe during a public assembly or in the dispersal of the same."

The Supreme Court said BP 880 clearly provided for the use of "maximum tolerance" in dealing with rallies.

"BP 880 cannot be condemned as unconstitutional. It does not curtail or unduly restrict freedoms. It merely regulates the use of public places as to the time, place and manner of assemblies," it said.

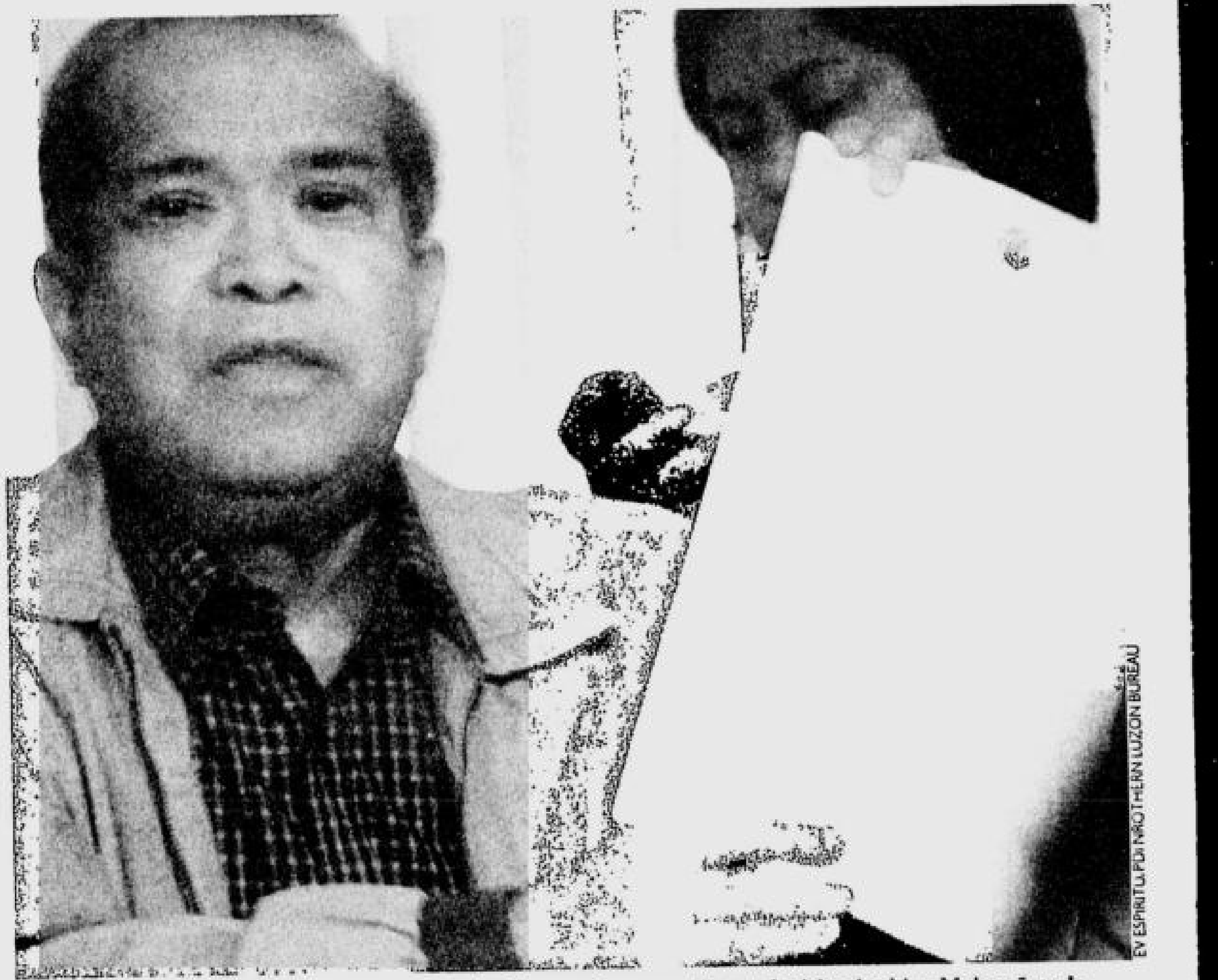
Far from being insidious, the justices said "maximum tolerance" was for the benefit of ralliers, not the government.

Freedom parks

The tribunal called on the Department of the Interior and Local Government to take necessary steps for the immediate establishment of a freedom park or plaza in every city and town of the country.

It said that after 30 days from the finality of its decision, "no prior permit shall be required for peaceful assemblies in public parks" that have not yet been declared freedom parks.

If, after 30 days, no such park had been identified, all public parks and plazas of the town or city shall be deemed freedom parks and that no permit shall be required to hold an assembly there, the decision said.



EV ESPIRITU, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

HERE IT IS: Lawyer Ismael Khan presents the 36-page Supreme Court decision junking Malacañang's calibrated preemptive response policy. The decision was penned by Justice Adolfo Azcuna.

Three groups had petitioned the Supreme Court in October last year to declare unconstitutional CPR and BP 880, saying the policy and law were contrary to their constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and expression.

Bayan and the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas complained that their Oct. 6, 2005, rally was violently dispersed by lawmen who used BP 880 as basis.

Twenty-six other protesters also claimed that they were injured, arrested and detained during a peaceful mass action they held on Sept. 26, 2005, and Oct. 5, 2005, while marching on Malacañang.

Only Cebu has rally park

The KMU also said that on Oct. 4, 2005, a rally it cosponsored to be conducted at Mendiola Bridge was blocked and forcibly dispersed.

The petitioners said BP 880 required a permit before a rally could be held regardless of the presence or absence of a clear and present danger.

The Supreme Court said BP 880 did not absolutely ban public assemblies but the law merely provided for restrictions on the time, place and manner of the assemblies.

Section 15 of BP 880 called for the establishment of freedom parks as a way of institutionalizing respect for the people's right to peacefully assemble, it said.

But during the oral arguments before the Supreme Court, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo said only Cebu City had declared a freedom park as mandated by BP 880.

This prompted the Supreme Court to say that the government's compliance with BP 880, which was passed in 1985, was "pathetic and regrettable."

Appeal being studied

During the oral arguments, Benipayo conceded that the CPR policy should be discontinued as a term since it did not mean anything other than maximum tolerance, as provided for by BP 880.

Ms Arroyo's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, said the administration respected the ruling, but that the solicitor general would study a possible appeal.

Defensor said this was in line with the government position that there should be clear guidelines during protests to protect the demonstrators and those who would be inconvenienced. *(See story above.)*

Rallies banned since Sept.

"What we are guarding against is the presence of possible saboteurs who might infiltrate the ranks of demonstrators and create trouble which later may be blamed on the government," Metro Manila police chief Vidal Querol told reporters.

Police have banned and violently dispersed virtually all public assemblies without permits since September.

The opposition has been mobilizing thousands of supporters in a bid to force Ms Arroyo to resign, but the crowds haven't matched the hundreds of thousands who took part in the people power revolts that ousted two Presidents in the last two decades. *With a report from AP*

FROM MAXIMUM TOLERANCE TO CPR

Sept. 21, 2005—On the 33rd anniversary of President Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial law, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announces a "calibrated preemptive response (CPR) in lieu of maximum tolerance" in dealing with protests without permits amid reports of continued destabilization attempts.

Sept. 26—Implementing the CPR policy for the first time, police use truncheons to break up a planned protest at Malacañang by the leftwing Kilusan para sa Demokrasya. Thirteen protesters are arrested.

Sept. 27—Party-list lawmakers file a resolution seeking an inquiry into the CPR policy. They also call on Congress to act on a proposed bill that will overturn a Marcos-era law, Batas Pambansa Blg. 880, the basis for CPR. It requires permits for rallies.

Oct. 4—The Commission on Human Rights says BP 880, or the Public Assembly Act, allows protesters to hold peaceful demonstrations even without a permit if authorities fail to act on their application within two days. Police disperse Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) rally at Malacañang and detain eight protesters.

Oct. 6—Police arrest 15 demonstrators marching on Mendiola from Morayta.

Oct. 14—Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Sen. Jamby Madrigal, priests, nuns and about 700 others attempting to march are hosed down near Mendiola. Bayan and other groups go to Supreme Court to assail the constitutionality of BP 880.

Oct. 17—El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde criticizes the dispersal of the Guingona-led rally and calls on the President to withdraw CPR.

Oct. 24—The CHR says there is no legal basis for CPR.

Feb. 24, 2006—President Macapagal-Arroyo issues Proclamation No. 1017 declaring a state of national emergency. Police break up rallies commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Edsa I uprising.

March 8—Police disperse ralliers marking International Women's Day at the Mabuhay Rotunda in Quezon City. Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel is arrested.

March 17—Police briefly detain former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman and 50 others for alleged illegal assembly along Roxas Boulevard. Soliman, wearing an Arroyo resign T-shirt, denies her group was holding a rally. *Cyril Bonabente, PDI Research*

Marcoses can pay off nat'l debt – PCGG

By Alcuin Papa

THE MARCOSES HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO pay the national debt, and more, according to the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG).

PCGG commissioner Ricardo Abcede told the Bulong Pulungan forum yesterday that Imelda Marcos, the widow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, had told him the extent of the Marcos wealth over dinner sometime in December 2005.

"She [Imelda] said the Marcos assets are enough to pay our national debt, plus more," Abcede said.

The national debt is estimated at P3 trillion while estimates of the Marcos ill-gotten assets are between $5 billion to $10 billion (about P500 billion).

Abcede is instigating negotiations for a compromise deal with the Marcoses that would involve the dismissal of the charges against the Marcos family in exchange for government getting a share of the ill-gotten wealth.

Last week, Abcede said he had met with a representative of the Imelda. Yesterday he identified this representative as Ding Diaz, a known Marcos supporter.

Abcede said the meeting with Diaz was merely "exploratory" and that he would need to sit down with Imelda's lawyer, Roberto Sison, for the substantive part of the negotiations.

But for starters, Abcede asked Diaz for a complete list of the Marcos assets both here and abroad. That list, Abcede was told, is forthcoming.

Compromise settlement

Abcede also said it was not true as lawyer Frank Chavez and former Senate President and former PCGG chair Jovito Salonga have contended that a 1998 Supreme Court decision on the Marcos ill-gotten wealth issue made any kind of compromise agreement with the Marcoses illegal.

"The decision does not prohibit negotiations or a settlement. It merely spells out what cannot be acceptable in negotiations. There is no statement there that prohibits any form of compromise agreement in the future," Abcede said.

He said the 1998 Supreme Court decision referred only to one compromise settlement that was presented to the high court and not to compromise in general between the government and the Marcoses.

"In fact, the Supreme Court encourages compromise agreement in civil cases," he said.

As for the criminal liability of the Marcoses in the various cases brought against them, Abcede said "there must be a way of dismissing the criminal cases [against the Marcoses]."

He said the Marcoses face a total of 520 civil and criminal cases here involving some P220 billion.

Under the law and the 1998 Supreme Court decision, criminal liability cannot be the subject of a compromise.

'No ceasefire'

Abcede said that to allow the status quo to continue—that is, to persist in prosecuting the Marcos cases—would mean millions more of government resources being spent to fight the Marcoses in court.

But he said there would be "no ceasefire" in the Marcos cases while negotiations are going on.

"A compromise deal with the Marcoses is not for President Macapagal-Arroyo or for Mrs. Marcos alone, it is for the Filipino people. I don't care about the moral issues involved. Part of our mandate is the recovery of the Marcos wealth. And the negotiations are within our mandate. I can defend this in Plaza Miranda," Abcede said.

Meanwhile, the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) warned that Imelda might try to control the terms of the settlement by using a dummy foundation.

The KMP said this in reaction to a report that the former First Lady was stipulating that proceeds from the deal should benefit a foundation of her choice.

"Aside from the fact that this is very dangerous and dubious because she can just form a dummy foundation to siphon [off] the wealth as her family has done during their reign, it also shows her predisposition to control the terms of the onerous deal," said Danilo "Ka Daning" Ramos, secretary general of KMP, in a statement.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 26, 2006
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading:	Acts 5:17-26
Gospel:	John 3:16-21

Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world; instead, through him the world is to be saved. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned. He who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the Name of the only Son of God.

This is how the Judgment is made: Light has come into the world and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For whoever does wrong hates the light and doesn't come to the light for fear that his deeds will be shown as evil. But whoever lives according to the truth comes into the light so that it can be clearly seen that his works have been done in God."

Commentary

We hear the work of the Spirit in the early Church in Acts, alongside the words of Jesus to Nicodemus. The apostles are arrested but an angel of the Lord sets them free to preach again boldly. They preach and are arrested again! And Jesus again and again tries to tell Nicodemus how God in love sent his Son to bring life to all the world, not condemning, but bringing Good News, bringing light. But the world and the children of the world (we often act more like them) prefer darkness to the light and do evil, not wanting our deeds to be exposed. We are challenged to decide again: for the light or for the deeds we wouldn't want exposed to the truth and light.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2006

ISSN 0116-2642

INQUIRER

Vol. 21 No. 137

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4007
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Circulation Customer Service Hotline 896-6000

• 100% soy ink •

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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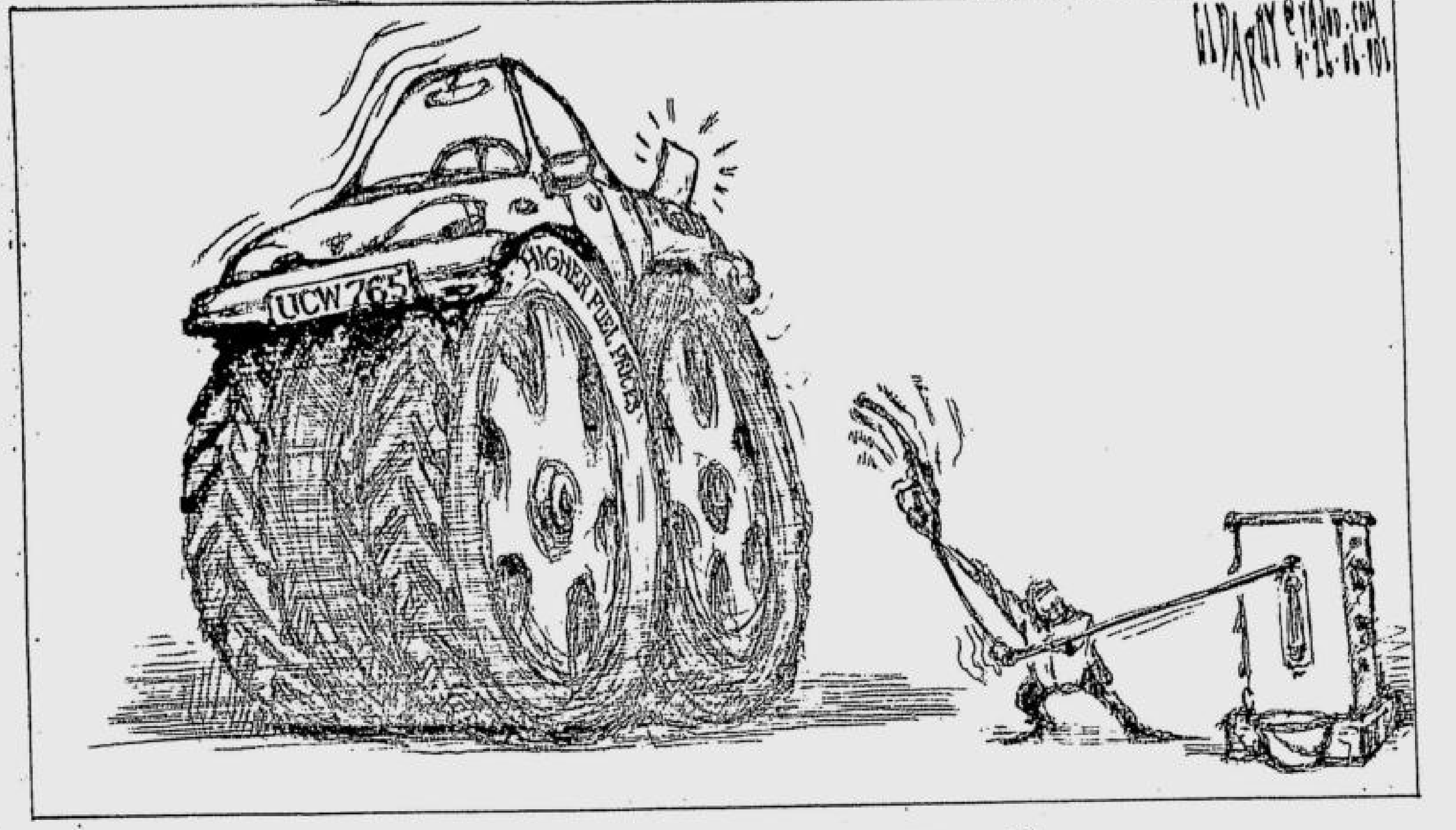

Blame game

EDITORIAL

JUST LIKE HER FATHER, WHO PRINTED CAMPAIGN posters in 1965 portraying the Senate as the enemy (admittedly one among many, for a beleaguered administration), since 2004 President Macapagal-Arroyo and her official family have been waging war against the Senate. The language of official press releases has become increasingly vitriolic—and increasingly bipolar: either the Senate is composed of "bloodthirsty senators," or "rogue legislators," or it is appealed to for cooperation. Which leads to the inevitable question of whether an administration that alternates between hissing at, and then begging to embrace, the Senate is operating on an even emotional, much less intellectual, keel.

In the end it doesn't matter if President Arroyo really held a meeting in Malacañang in which she scolded Charter change advocates for not getting enough done and taking too long to accomplish what they have. It is irrelevant, too, if the President thundered that the Senate is the enemy and must be vigorously, and continuously, portrayed as such. What does matter is that never since the pre-martial law Marcos administration, or the American era before that, has a chief executive been so hell-bent and dead-set on a political showdown with the Senate.

To accomplish the defeat—and abolition—of the Senate, nothing is beyond the pale, neither the selective use of information in ads or in press statements. In the case of the recent, highly expensive, Philippine Information Agency campaign, survey firms have complained that their findings have been misused, a complaint shared by the Makati Business Club, whose members are struggling to recall statements it allegedly made, as quoted in the ads. In the case of press statements, the Senate is blamed for the non-passage of a budget that was submitted late by Malacañang, and deliberated upon for eight months in the House of Representatives (with a total lack of speed until all pork allocations were ascertained). Now both the House and the President are expecting the Senate to complete its budget deliberations within one month! The Senate can be faulted for many things—among them, extravagance in insisting on renting Pasay City premises when it could have constructed a home for itself in Quezon City, delays in deliberating on the ethanol bill—but it cannot be faulted for delaying the budget.

The executive branch is engaging in a mentally dishonest blame game. One, for example, is putting forward "appeals" to the Senate not to investigate allegations of executive abuse of authority or corruption, so as to help cope with a looming oil crisis. Passage of an ethanol bill now will only see results in several months or even a few years. Short-term savings on air-conditioning or gasoline by the Senate would also pale in comparison to the expenses incurred for the same things by either the executive branch or the House of Representatives. Indeed, it should be asked: After the fuss and bother during the last spike in oil prices, where did the executive devote its energies? The answer, of course, is the so-called people's initiative for Charter change.

With the House of Representatives and the presidency united in a mission to change the form of government primarily to achieve the lifting of term limits and dispense with a potentially disastrous 2007 election and thereby prevent a second round of impeachment, among other things, the only thing standing between a change of government for, by and with the administration coalition is the Senate. This does not require perfection, integrity or even sincerity on the part of the Senate or the senators. It only requires them to do what they are meant to do under the existing constitutional order. That order, after all, was overwhelmingly ratified by the majority of the Filipino people, while the President and her allies, at best, can only point to a minority, however dedicated or well-funded subscribing to their view.

What we are witnessing is a strange kind of power play. Instead of the Roman senators assassinating Julius Caesar to eliminate dictatorship and tyranny, the script has been rewritten so that it is now Caesar branding the Senate as the home of "destabilizers," and condemning the senators to be eaten by the lions.

Gringo/Willie Nep at Kapihan

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE AREA IN FRONT OF THE MANILA HOTEL was crawling with cops when I arrived Monday morning for the regular Kapihan sa Manila breakfast forum. At the door, the hotel guards asked me: "*Darating po ba si* Gringo?" (Is Gringo coming?)

"Yes, I think so," I replied. "I got a call that he is on the way."

Inside the Roma Ristoranti, where the Kapihan is regularly held, a crowd of media people was already waiting and cameras had been set up. They were all waiting for Gringo Honasan, the former senator turned fugitive.

I had written that Gringo was going to hold a press conference at the Kapihan that morning. Radio commentators announced that morning that Gringo would be at the Kapihan.

Another scheduled guest, Dante Jimenez of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), was already there. I had also invited Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez or his representative, but neither had arrived yet. They were to discuss with Jimenez the commutation to life imprisonment of all death sentences by President Macapagal-Arroyo. "Maybe they read that Gringo would be here so they backed out," somebody commented.

After announcing that Gringo was on the way to the hotel, I began interviewing Jimenez. The VACC leader said that while the President has the power to grant executive clemency to prisoners, she should do it on a case-by-case basis. She cannot make a blanket commutation of all death sentences, including those of prisoners whose convictions have not yet been confirmed by the Supreme Court. Until now, Jimenez said, Malacañang doesn't even have a complete list of the death convicts saved by the President.

After some time, there was a commotion outside and the photographers, cameramen and some reporters rushed out. Flashbulbs flashed. Gringo had arrived.

Journalists, waiters and hotel guests craned their necks to look at the new arrival. "*Oo, siya nga! Siya nga!*" someone muttered.

People jostled one another to be photographed with Gringo. An American correspondents of a big California newspaper had himself photographed beside Gringo and began interviewing him.

After a while, he stopped, looking confused and perplexed. Gringo was giving funny answers to his serious questions. The crowd was laughing. Then it dawned on him: the man he was interviewing was not the ex-senator turned fugitive—although he was the spitting image of Gringo—but the famous impersonator, mimic and comedian Willie Nepomuceno. The American laughed, shook Willie's hand giggling, and they entered Roma together, followed by a chuckling crowd.

Gringo sat at the elevated long table reserved for panelists. Two aides stood behind him.

"What are you going to tell us?" I asked him. He had been reported in that morning's newspapers to have been holding backroom talks with the government.

"I am denying that," he said. "There are no talks, backroom, front room or side room."

"I want to show you my proposal to the government on how we can achieve peace and progress. It can be summed up in four words: Cooperation, Organization, Unity, and finally Peace," he said, showing flash cards with each word and explaining what each meant. "When we have achieved them, this is what we are going to have." He showed another card with the four words printed on it consecutively. The first letters of each word were printed in red to spell "COUP." The crowd roared in laughter.

"For more enlightenment, I am inviting you to the Music Museum on April 27 and 28, in the evening." Then Gringo/Willie held up a poster. It looked like a poster for "Pinoy Big Brother" with the photos of 10 characters on it. They looked like those of Presidents Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos and Cory Aquino, Senators Ping Lacson and Gringo, comedian Dolphy, boxer Manny Pacquiao, singer Freddie Aguilar, Garci and Kris Aquino. On closer look, however, those familiar with the impersonations by Willie noticed that all the characters, except the two women, were only one man: Willie Nep. And the title read "Pinoy's Big Bother." Willie is holding another of his satirical shows tomorrow and Friday.

But there's one character missing in his menagerie: the greatest impersonator of them all, GMA. She has successfully impersonated the President of the Philippines for several years already.

This is not the first time Willie has made a surprise appearance as Gringo at the Kapihan. Years ago, when he was also being hunted by the Aquino administration, there were reports that he was going to the Kapihan. Our panelists then were several congressmen. When they heard that Gringo was coming, some suggested, "*Umalis na tayo dito, baka magkaputukan at tamaan pa tayo.*" (We better leave. There might be shooting and we might get hit.)

Gringo did arrive a few minutes later, accompanied by a squad of uniformed "soldiers" with rifles. The congressmen left in a hurry. But it wasn't Gringo, of course. It was Willie Nep.

* * *

Still at the Manila Hotel this Saturday, April 29, will be the Grand Alumni Homecoming of the University of Sto. Tomas to mark the 396th anniversary of its founding. UST alumni of all colleges and faculties are urged to attend as planned activities culminating in the 400th anniversary of the university in 2011 will be unveiled and discussed. Among these activities is the inauguration of the new 40-hectare campus in Laguna. Another 80-hectare campus will follow in Cotabato.

Charity begins at home

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

FE HIDALGO, THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF the Department of Education, had an interesting message for the Filipino officials of Filipino schools in Xiamen, China. After pressing upon them the importance of good management, she asked them to make sure their Filipino students kept well to their roots.

"As Filipino educators overseas, you must know the importance of promoting Filipino identity. You must recognize the need to teach Filipino children abroad that they are part of that Filipino identity not just because they belong to our race but also because they contribute to the richness of our race. They are integral to our national pride."

I'm glad that Hidalgo did not go into the usual government spiel about the importance of Filipino children learning English to get ahead in life. The Chinese are bad English speakers, and so are the Thais, but they've gotten far ahead in life simply by learning the language not just of efficiency but of ethics. To paraphrase Shakespeare, it's not in our tongue but in ourselves that we are underlings. To paraphrase Shakespeare even more, a cheat by any tongue would smell just as foul.

Hidalgo's message isn't bad at all, but it's also not a little ironic. Because her message in fact shouldn't just be addressed to Filipino officials in Filipino schools abroad, it should be addressed to Filipino officials in Filipino schools in the Philippines. The need to strengthen Filipino identity among Filipino students is no less pressing here than abroad.

It's not unlike the complaint of Filipinos being discriminated against abroad, particularly in the United States and other Western countries, which I've written about in the past. Frankly, I cannot understand why we complain about being discriminated against abroad when we discriminate against ourselves right in our own country. We look down on our countrymen who are dark (to this day, I find the concept of a product devoted to whitening the skin, its premise being that it improves looks, absolutely stupefying), flat-nosed and short (which itself is a judgment based on a particular norm). Indeed, we laugh at people who speak English with a Visayan accent while ironically admiring deejays who mangle Tagalog with an American accent. The discrimination begins right at home.

So does lack of identity. The problem begins right at home. In fact, the bigger irony is that it's Filipinos abroad who often have a stronger sense of Filipino roots from being driven to confront them than Filipinos at home. I've written about that before, too. We look closely at our Asian neighbors, many of whom have taken vast strides in life, and we will notice that the real difference between them and us is not that they have parliamentary governments instead of presidential ones (some are parliamentary, some are not), not that they have authoritarian systems instead of democratic ones (some are authoritarian, some are not), but that they have a strong sense of national identity. They have a strong sense of country. They have a strong sense of who they are.

I doubt that the other Southeast Asian kids—the Thais, Singaporeans, Malaysians, Indonesians, Vietnamese, Laotians and Khmers—will answer in surveys that they prefer to be nationals of America, Japan and Saudi Arabia the way our kids do. That was what the late Malou Doronila found out in studies in the 1990s about the values and attitudes of public school kids in the Philippines, America, Japan and Saudi being the first three preferences in that order, the Philippines ranking only fourth.

Lest we think that the idea of national loyalty is a luxury rather than a necessity in these "globalized" times, let us think again. Its practical effects are patent and immense. Other countries have humongous corruption, too, Suharto having stolen much more than Marcos, but the difference is that Suharto kept the money in Indonesia where it employed Indonesians while Marcos stashed the loot abroad where it merely became an object of treasure hunt for the Presidential Commission on Good Government. That is an epic difference, which goes a long way to explaining why we are poor and miserable and why our neighbors are not.

Indeed, as education goes, we can run our universities with the most modern management principles learned from the Asian Institute of Management and we can equip the same universities with the latest digital marvels from South Korea, but none of that will mean anything for the country if our graduates will just make a beeline for workplaces abroad. Which is happening even as we speak: We are no longer just losing maids and forklift operators to Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, we are now losing doctors and teachers to the United States and Canada. That may help to stave off the free fall of the peso relative to the dollar in the short run, but that will have the most vicious consequences in the long run. Given in particular the economic wisdom that says a country's most precious resource is its people, notably its educated people.

I know I felt envious when a friend of mine told me about being toured in a steel plant in northern China and meeting all sorts of managers in jeans and polo shirts, many of whom toted degrees from Cambridge and Oxford. Filipinos abroad may, of course, argue that that is so because the Chinese have jobs to come home to. But that is probably putting the cart before the horse. In fact the opposite is true: They have jobs because their people who acquire knowledge and skills abroad come home to build a country, which creates the jobs. The difference lies in the attitude. They say: Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. We just say: Ask not. Different attitudes, different results.

Remind Filipino kids abroad they're Filipinos? Remind Filipino kids at home they're Filipinos!

Oil shock shifts national agenda to economics

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE RECORD RISE IN OIL PRICES TO $75 A barrel last week has raised fears among oil consuming countries—from big consumers like the United States to small economies like the Philippines—that high energy costs would snuff out economic growth.

The impact on the Philippines, a low-growth economy, was immediate. The price spike immediately refocused the national agenda to an urgent economic issue, the source of which sprang from the rising tensions between the United States and Iran (the world's fourth biggest crude exporter) over Iran's defiance of international pressure (mainly from the West) to halt its nuclear program.

For months since July last year, when political crisis engulfed the Arroyo administration, Filipinos have been led to believe that political issues were the center of their universe, and that economic issues were of little consequence to their lives, taking secondary importance to their consuming passion to unseat an administration that they intensely loathed. In fact, it was deemed unfashionable in some political circles to talk about the economic effects of the continuing political crisis and uncertainty not only on economic growth but more so on the lives of the poor Filipinos. It has been argued that paying attention to economic issues would take our eyes off the legitimacy issues rocking the Arroyo administration.

The grim prospects of another international oil shock have abruptly shifted national attention away from the highly engrossing political issues highlighted by the Supreme Court's decision voiding certain portions of Executive Order 464 and upholding the right of Congress to compel, under certain circumstances, executive department officials, to testify at congressional inquiries.

The specter of another oil shock has so alarmed the political class that within a week after the Court's decision, the congressional and executive agenda has abruptly shifted focus to the oil prices spike, with both administration officials and lawmakers of any consequence now giving priority to how to absorb the escalating prices of crude, which has added $15 to the cost of a barrel in a matter of weeks.

There is a sort of panic reaction to the record crude prices, and the alarm has at last awakened the political protagonists to the reality that the economy cannot permanently be excluded as a critical element in defining the priorities of the national agenda.

At a meeting of ministers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries at Doha the other day, Opec ministers said there was nothing they could do to halt surging oil prices. Dr. Edmund Maduabebe Daukoru told reporters, "Few economies in the world could make long-term business plans at the rate of $75 a barrel." He added that even if Opec were to increase its oil production, there were no quick solutions to the problems. Increasing Opec output, he said, was not expected to lower the prices and would only serve to clog the market with additional supplies. But he predicted that the price of oil would eventually drop to a more realistic and stable $50 to $60 a barrel.

But until this happens, the Philippines will have to live with the current price, make adjustments and immediately find measures that will keep the price spike from flowing on to transport fares, electricity charges and other essential goods and commodities, including cooking oil.

The oil price rise has moved up to the top of the national agenda proposals calling for a special session of Congress to consider such measures as exempting petroleum products from the 12-percent value-added tax and scrapping the 3 percent tax on oil imports. A consensus seems to be developing among legislators belonging to both the administration coalition and the opposition to give priority to suspending the 12-percent VAT, for the purpose of blunting the impact of the oil price increases.

These two proposed measures are not painless solutions. Administration officials say that the suspension of the 12-percent VAT would cost the government P29 billion yearly in prospective revenue, while scrapping the tariff would mean P7.5 million in foregone revenue. The suspension of the VAT requires a joint resolution by both Houses of Congress.

This unaccustomed shift in priorities to economic concerns has mercifully re-routed the congressional agenda from the confrontational course it was moving into with Malacañang following the Supreme Court's decision on EO 464. This diversion comes as a welcome relief from the overpoliticized national agenda that has focused on the crisis of legitimacy of the Arroyo administration. It postpones a political showdown as a number of Senate committees prepared to resume inquiries into issues that have been suspended since September last year, when President Macapagal-Arroyo issued EO 464 banning executive department officials from testifying at legislative inquiries without her permission. These inquiries covered a wide range of issues, including allegations of cheating by the President during the 2004 election and the $503-million NorthRail project assisted by the Chinese government.

Congress has little time to lose on a showdown with the Palace over the resumption of the suspended investigations. It is due to resume its session on May 15 and adjourn on June 9. The intervention of urgent economic issues spoils the expectations of fun in the circuses provided by legislative investigations. The public is likely to have a reprieve from fruitless inquiries.

Nepali 'People Power'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE'S SOMETHING EARTHSHAKING GOING on in Nepal, with events taking place promising changes so fundamental they could alter not just the kingdom's political system and structures, but its very culture and belief system.

Though demonstrators were reported yesterday celebrating their "victory" after King Gyanendra bowed to the demands of the seven-party opposition coalition to recall and reorganize Parliament, the king himself and the institution of the monarchy have been severely weakened, if not imperiled.

Nepal is the world's only Hindu monarchy, and the king has been traditionally venerated as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. So conservative is Nepali culture that tourists wishing to enter the bigger shrines are required to remove every bit of leather from their persons, be it shoes, bags or belts. But after King Gyanendra ascended to the throne and subsequently imposed authoritarian rule and dissolved Parliament, the high esteem if not veneration with which many Nepalis held the royal family, has been tarnished considerably. Today, in the wake of the king's concessions to the protesters, Nepali politicians interviewed said they were for hastening the transformation of Nepal into a constitutional monarchy, with the king reduced to a symbolic head of state.

* * *

THE EROSION of the monarchy's power and image has much to do with the way King Gyanendra assumed the throne. In 2001, if you will recall, Gyanendra's older brother King Birendra and other members of the royal family were massacred allegedly by Crown Prince Dipendra, who then turned his gun on himself. Gyanendra, who was out-of-town at the time, ascended to the throne as the most senior surviving member of the royal family. But he has never been particularly popular or liked by ordinary Nepalis or politicians.

In fact, in the wake of King Gyanendra's subsequent actions, talk persisted of a "conspiracy" around the 2001 massacre, since the investigation was conducted in strict confidence. Prince Dipendra was supposed to have been enraged by his family's opposition to his bride-to-be, but it remains a mystery how he was able to gun down almost his entire family without the royal bodyguards reacting. Even more suspicion lingers around the survival of the present crown prince, who was in the Palace that day.

Reporters are calling the king's concession and the naming of a new prime minister by the opposition coalition a victory of Nepalese "People Power." We may see in the near future whether this exercise of "People Power" will lead to a fundamental restructuring of Nepal's power structures, or if this is not merely a political re-shuffle, with the same old faces returning to power and working out a new arrangement with the king.

* * *

FOR one thing, the decade-old Maoist insurgency still simmers in the countryside and has even gained in strength. The Maoists, while they were allied with the opposition that organized the massive protests in Kathmandu, have said they are rejecting the arrangements hammered out with King Gyanendra.

Nepal is thus still a long way away from long-term stability. Filipino viewers had a glimpse of the effects of the insurgency when a Filipino TV crew, trekking to the Everest Base Camp in the course of their coverage of what they hope will be the first Filipino conquest of Mt. Everest, had their walkie-talkies confiscated by Nepali soldiers. The soldiers explained that they simply didn't want the "rebels" to get hold of the radio transmitters and use these for their own purposes.

In many ways, Nepal these days shares many of the same problems with the Philippines, though Nepalese have it worse. Though we are a poor country, Nepal, landlocked and mountainous and caught between two giants—India and China—is even poorer. Its economy is highly dependent on tourism, whether that of adventurers drawn by mountain-climbing, trekking and white-water rafting, or of seekers of exotica drawn by the views, the rituals and temples.

But since the outbreak of the Maoist insurgency a decade ago, and of the month-long demonstrations and general strike, tourism has hit rock-bottom, with foreign governments issuing warnings against visiting Nepal and even air-lifting their nationals out of Kathmandu.

Will Nepal tourism ever recover to the 1960s-1970s levels when it was the darling of jet-setters and New Age seekers? Only if the government is able to convince travelers that it's still safe to visit the country and that they will not be caught in the crossfire of battle or in yet another massive protest.

* * *

GIVEN the scale of the changes taking place in Nepal, it seems almost an embarrassment that much of the TV news coverage on the country focuses not on the political upheavals but on the "race" for the first Filipino to "conquer" Everest.

ABS-CBN is funding the effort of "Team Philippines," which has set a timetable for an Everest climb in 2007, while GMA-7 is providing funds and coverage to the climb of Romi Garduce, who hopes to scale the world's tallest mountain this year.

While bragging rights are certainly a prize worth going after, from this ordinary Filipino's viewpoint, it hardly matters who makes it to Everest's summit first. And why should it matter so much that a Filipino climbs this mountain, when the conquest of Everest is no longer the breathtaking achievement it once was? Indeed, didn't a blind man reach the summit a few years ago?

The pressure to be "first" may also make the racers careless and cause them to overlook the risks and dangers involved. Given the scale of their ambitions, making it this year or next should be of little consequence.

Surprise attack

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

STUDENTS READING ABOUT THE PHILIPPINE Revolution or Filipino-American War from their boring textbooks find it hard to imagine how the battles were actually fought. They often ask what common soldiers felt or thought at the time of engagement with the enemy.

Textbooks provide general outlines of the struggle for independence. We know the outcome but we lack the details. We have a skeleton rather than flesh and blood. This is why my reading list contains a lot of primary source material, usually first-person accounts that will connect my students with their past.

To keep my readings current and interesting, I keep searching for new material. Recently, I came across a draft letter from Emilio Aguinaldo to a certain Raymundo Melliza in the Visayas giving instructions to launch a surprise attack on the enemy, thus providing an insight into the way our heroes—both known and unknown—fought over a century ago.

The draft letter was written from the revolutionary capital, Malolos, and is dated Nov. 4, 1898. It encourages people to take over towns and fill the enemy with "sudden fright and terror" through surprise attacks as follows:

"Let the attack on Iloilo, the capital, be a surprise, making use of bolos, daggers, and clubs, so as to avoid as many casualties as possible, because if the attack would be made with rifles, they would begin to fire at a long distance from the town and it is easy to see that the same would not be taken quickly in that event. Therefore, surprise is better, and none will be engaged in it but those of the town itself, in the following manner: Convene inhabitants of the town, in number equal to the fourth part of that of the Spaniards, and divide them into platoons equal also to in number to the posts or barracks of the same. Besides this, let there be five or six men, previously instructed who will enter two at a time into the barracks, carrying with them presents for the commanders under the pretext of asking a pass or of denouncing several revolutionists and diverting them by such means."

Obviously, the barracks had both Filipino and Spanish soldiers. The object of using hand weapons was to keep casualties down. Only the foreigners were to be attacked; the Filipino soldiers were to be convinced to shift loyalties.

Aguinaldo was also worried because the soldiers, often poorly trained, discharged their weapons before they got within range, thus not only wasting bullets but alerting the barracks long before the attack could be successfully mounted. Aguinaldo continued:

"Before all this is done, fix upon an hour, say 12 o'clock daytime, and instantaneously and simultaneously let the attack begin. Apart from all this, let there be in the same way persons charged with dissuading the people of the town from giving assistance which they might feel like extending to their brethren engaged in battle. Direct them to call out in a loud voice to the people not to be afraid, and other words that may serve to cheer their hearts and stimulate their courage.

"Endeavor to secure the sentinels and commanders; if they will not surrender, kill them. Also, secure their armories, and when this is done, the arms found there will be taken by our men. Those who are to fight, or to help those who previously entered the barracks, should look out well, and charge those who carried the presents, that they shall under no circumstances take a rifle; bolos are preferable in hand-to-hand conflict while they are mixed together. At all parts, they will use but the bolo and will be merciful to our compatriots, the native Filipino soldiers, persuading them to unite with us, shouting in a loud voice the words 'The Visayans and Filipinos are not enemies,' and I am convinced that victory will be almost certain; on the contrary, if timidity should prevail, nothing will be accomplished; but Filipinos are far from being of a cowardly nature when defense of their country is in question, especially the Visayans."

What is shouted during battle? Textbook history teaches us that Andres Bonifacio's rallying cry was *"Sugod mga kapatid!" or "Kalayaan!"* Common sense, which by the way is not common, should tell us that prior to or aside from these lofty words, Bonifacio surely shouted one of the most glorious words in the Filipino language that begins with "P." It cannot be quoted here, so following Mon Tulfo's example, let's just put it down here as "@#$%^&*!"

To conclude, Aguinaldo wrote:

"In view of this, I entertain the hope that you will not allow the Spanish government to continue there any longer, nor allow them to fortify and renew their courage. I repeat, carry this out in a short time, and if you obey me, it is advisable that the 10th of this month shall not go before they are prevented from constructing more entrenchments, as mentioned above. Families should not leave their respective houses, but dig holes where they can take refuge from the bullets and bury their money in the ground so it may not be discovered.

"Brothers, take courage, for in 20 minutes, the battle will be over and the Spaniards will have surrendered, if you follow the methods I have described above, and such others as may appear to you to be conducive to final success; also we shall probably have no casualties."

In hindsight, we read this and realize it is easier said than done.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Sunflowers

"GO AND APPRECIATE OUR SUNFLOWERS."

That was the way Frances Mae Ramos ended her speech, delivered on behalf of new graduates, during recognition rites of the UP College of Social Sciences and Philosophy last Saturday.

I was feeling particularly proud as the anthropology department's chairperson because Frances Mae was graduating with a BA in Anthropology, summa cum laude, the first in our 89-year history. But amid the jubilation, I was also feeling a bit of malaise.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

That was the word used by our guest speaker, Juan Miguel Luz, to begin his speech. The college had chosen Luz as guest speaker because of his honesty and integrity. As education undersecretary for finance, he had refused to accept three government checks for a congressman's scholarship program. That did not please the gods (and goddesses), and last Friday, Luz resigned from the Department of Education.

Luz identified eight problems that we face as a nation, and offered solutions for each of them. The problems he named were a mixed lot, ranging from the lack of a sense of shared history to the rigidity of religion. But in this season of graduations, I wanted to zero in on one of the problems he mentioned: miseducation.

Inequitable

Luz explained what he meant by miseducation: an inequitable educational system. He pointed out how for most Filipino children, the only option for basic education is the public school system, where they will get six years of elementary and four years of secondary education. That 10 years is far from adequate, compared to most countries of the world where the young get at least 12 years of education. (China, for example, has six years of elementary education and another six of *jung xie* or middle school.)

Our private schools do offer more years of basic schooling: preschool and nursery and kindergarten, up to seven years of elementary education, four years of high school. It's not cheap to go for these alternatives; just last Sunday, I was talking with a friend who told me she was going to shell out P38,000 for her daughter's preschool tuition.

Even the middle class will invest large amounts for preschool and elementary education, hoping that their children will have a headstart that will get them into a government science high school or eventually one of the state universities, preferably the University of the Philippines, with its low tuition.

Mismatch

This problem of inequity is amplified many times over. The poor get only a few years of basic education, and of dubious quality at that. We produce high school graduates with not much more than some degree of functional literacy. They enter the labor force but are often underqualified for the few jobs that are available, so they find their way overseas where they will get $250 to $350 a month, not much more than what they would get in the Philippines if they had a bit more skills.

Meanwhile, what happens to those who could afford a better quality of basic education? They get into UP, and if the families still have money, into one of the better private schools. But these graduates don't necessarily have it better either. They're well trained, and end up, too, mismatched to the job market. I am amazed at the number of jobless "computer science" graduates. Many will leave, which has led Dr. Sergio Cao, UP Diliman's chancellor, to tell UP graduates last week: "Wherever you go, remember that we did not teach you just to be exported."

But Frances Mae gives a new twist to the problems, when she reminds us it's not just a matter of salaries: "I am not going to complain about unequal opportunities, for unbeknownst to some of us belonging to this college, not all social scientists starve. If we would be willing to sacrifice principles along the way, we could actually cash in on dictated research commissions from huge profiteering corporations. Or allow ourselves to be obscenely paid consultants to traditional politicians."

Frances Mae talked about how, as an anthropology student, she had gone off for fieldwork and learned to appreciate how that kind of work can help to build the nation. In her speech, she fretted about how our government, unable to recognize cultural differences, is bent on imposing "uniform and linear plans." She also criticized the way these plans are "trapped by the standards of economically powerful states whose socio-political and cultural landscapes are far from identical to ours."

But what will happen to Frances Mae and others like her? After the recognition ceremonies, Dr. Zosimo Lee, our dean, asked me if I knew of Frances Mae's plans. I said she wanted to do graduate work. The dean was ecstatic, but I was feeling, well, that malaise again, because UP really has very little to offer our graduate students by way of scholarships and grants.

Fighting chance

Out in the sun, after the recognition rites, I found Frances Mae and her family. I went to congratulate her, to encourage her to push through with graduate work.

By coincidence, our guest speaker came over as well. He congratulated Frances Mae, commenting how their speeches had such similar themes. His advice to Frances Mae was to work before going on to graduate school.

My feeling is that for someone like her, it might be possible to combine both options, to find some way to have her begin working in the real world, even while continuing to pick up skills as a social scientist.

It all boils down to leveling the playing field, to giving a fighting chance to our young. Many other countries offer high quality basic education and then make the students—rich and poor—compete for college. Just recently, I was talking with an Indian friend and he told me about an additional 2 percent income tax they're now paying. He wasn't complaining, as he explained how this added revenue was to be allocated specifically for basic education, to include programs like nutritious meals for the students.

A fighting chance also means giving options to the ones who do make it through college, whether through UP and other good schools. We beg them not to leave, but are we offering enough to get them to stay? As we see with Frances Mae, it's more than a matter of salaries.

As I left UP last Saturday, I paused briefly to look at the sunflowers, as Frances Mae had suggested. UP plants them each year right before graduation, an appropriate metaphor for education. Like our young people, the sunflowers look deceptively sturdy, but they get to bloom only with intense nurturing: lots of sunlight, water and nutrients from the soil. It's hard work, but when they bloom, as our graduates do, the sunflowers bring such cheer and joy.

The sunflowers will disappear after they bloom. Our graduates will need more nurturing so that maybe, eventually, they'll get it right with their children and we won't need more speeches about national malaise.

Bring out Mayuga Report

NOW THAT THE SUPREME COURT has ruled that Executive Order 464, the gag order of the commander in chief, is unconstitutional, I hope that Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga will find it in his heart to make public the Mayuga Report, with or without the consent of his superiors, as a matter of duty.

In the recent past, nothing has hurt the Armed Forces of the Philippines as an institution as much as the allegations that some of its senior officers helped in rigging the 2004 elections in Mindanao. Worse, those allegations have caused restiveness in the AFP ranks and pushed certain officers in the AFP, including fellow "Peemayers," to break from the chain of command and withdraw their support from our commander in chief.

Mayuga will help put closure to the issue by disclosing his findings in full. Cavalier Hermogenes Esperon and Cavalier Gabriel Habacon must be cleared of the allegations if, as we hope, they are innocent, not only for their sake but for the sake of our commander in chief. Mayuga must say so, regardless of how a cynical public will receive his disclosure.

On the other hand, if his investigation confirms their complicity in the election fraud in 2004, I pray that as a Peemayer, Mayuga will have the courage to call a spade a spade. Doing so may jeopardize his military career but that, I hope, will be a small price to pay for upholding the truth, for the sake of our country.

Be not afraid, Cavalier Mat, there will be "solid ranks of gray" that will stand by you.

PMA, Oh hail to thee!

—COL. LEONARDO O. ODOÑO (Ret.),
PMA Class of 1964, ,
Executive Heights, Parañaque City

Respected, admired, credible Comelec chair

IN HIS APRIL 8 COLUMN, FORMER SUPREME Court Justice Isagani A. Cruz said that "the victories of Marcos in 1965 and 1969 were marred by tremendous vote-buying that the Comelec (Commission on Elections) took no action to prevent and correct."

My late father, Juan V. Borra Sr. was the Comelec chair from 1962 to 1968. Hence, there was inference that he acquiesced to the cheating.

Diosdado Macapagal was president in 1965. My father was his campaign manager when he ran and was elected Vice President in 1957 and was elected President in 1961. In 1962, the President appointed my father Comelec chair.

I very distinctly remember my father putting in place the reforms that would ensure clean and honest elections—deputizing the Philippine Constabulary and the Armed Forces of the Philippines for election duty, scrapping the old voters' registration list and setting up election centers all over the country, among other things. I was a college student then.

All those who knew my father can attest to his honesty and integrity. Thus, he would not have condoned any form of cheating. Both my father and Macapagal were paragons of probity and integrity. Marcos was only the Senate president then, and he had no influence whatsoever on the Comelec. In fact, when my father asked his good friend "Dadong" to concede the elections (since Marcos had an insurmountable 700,000-vote lead), the two had a falling out and they never reconciled until my father's death in 1991.

I and my family agonized over Cruz's column because I personally admire him and the incisiveness, truthfulness and logic of his observations. But since my father is no longer around to defend himself, I feel that it is my filial obligation—to him and to my 85-year-old mother—to take exception to Cruz's observations on the 1965 presidential elections.

My father was one of the most respected, admired and credible Comelec chairpersons. He earned the distinction because of his vision, honesty and integrity. We honestly feel that Cruz's observations on the 1965 presidential elections were an oversight on his part.

—JUAN VARGAS BORRA JR.,
jvborra@gmail.com

'Salvaging' worst form of death penalty

ON EASTER SUNDAY, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo thought of a perfect way to appease critics of her administration. She declared that no more death penalty would be allowed during her presidency and that she would abolish the death penalty. But as the INQUIRER editorial "Life after death" pointed out, the massacre of activists under Ms Arroyo remains a very critical issue. (PDI, 4/17/06)

As our nation prepared to commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we received another shocking piece of news from Agusan del Sur: Florencio Perez Cervantes, a 27-year-old peasant leader, had been shot 47 times inside his home. A Bayan Muna supporter, Cervantes was also known as a very religious man. He actively served his church as a member of a lay organization. We grieve and we cry out for justice for him and the hundreds of other victims who suffered persecution in the hands of modern-day Roman soldiers.

We condemn in strongest terms the killing of Cervantes and other government critics and grass-roots activists. Their execution is the most horrendous form of death penalty.

The human rights group Karapatan has documented at least 556 civilian victims of extra-judicial killings under the Arroyo regime. After last Easter, can Ms Arroyo assure us there will be no more such killings? Still, Ms Arroyo and her allies must answer for this form of death penalty imposed on leaders and members of people's organizations and progressive party-list groups.

No one should be persecuted for his/her political convictions. The so-called leftists may not be fond of traditional religious rituals, but their fight for just and humane wages, genuine land reform and other causes clearly shows that their persuasions hew closely to Christ's injunction to serve the poor, deprived and oppressed.

Under the Arroyo regime, 13 priests, pastors and lay church workers have been killed because of their involvement in social movements. How ironic that a priest, Fr. Romeo Intengan, should be directly involved in labeling groups as "enemies of the state," or "communist fronts," thus laying down the justification for the government's decision to impose on them the extra-judicial kind of death penalty.

In the final analysis, the high crimes of fraud, plunder, corruption and human rights abuses of the Arroyo administration are the main reasons why the country cannot significantly move on to economic progress, political unity and moral recovery.

—AMIE DURAL,
secretary general,
Promotion of Church People's Response,
3/F NCCP Compound, 879 Edsa Quezon City

'Da Vinci Code' no match to faith

WHAT'S THE BIG FUSS ABOUT "THE DA VINCI Code"? What are Christian leaders so afraid of? I have read that novel of Dan Brown and I consider my hardbound-copy a priceless possession. But my faith has not been swayed at all even after reading it for a second time. On the contrary, it confirmed my convictions about the matter, not that they were not already firm.

The Catholic leaders, in raising arms against the showing and publication of "The Da Vinci Code," are actually doing what the book would like to portray the Church has done, that is, to hide facts about the Christian faith, for its own selfish ends.

I find no blasphemous part in the story. There's nothing to hide. Whether it is offensive to the faithful or not, it is better to open it and for the readers to judge it. If one's faith is strong, no book or film can shake it.

—MARITA B. BALLOGUING,
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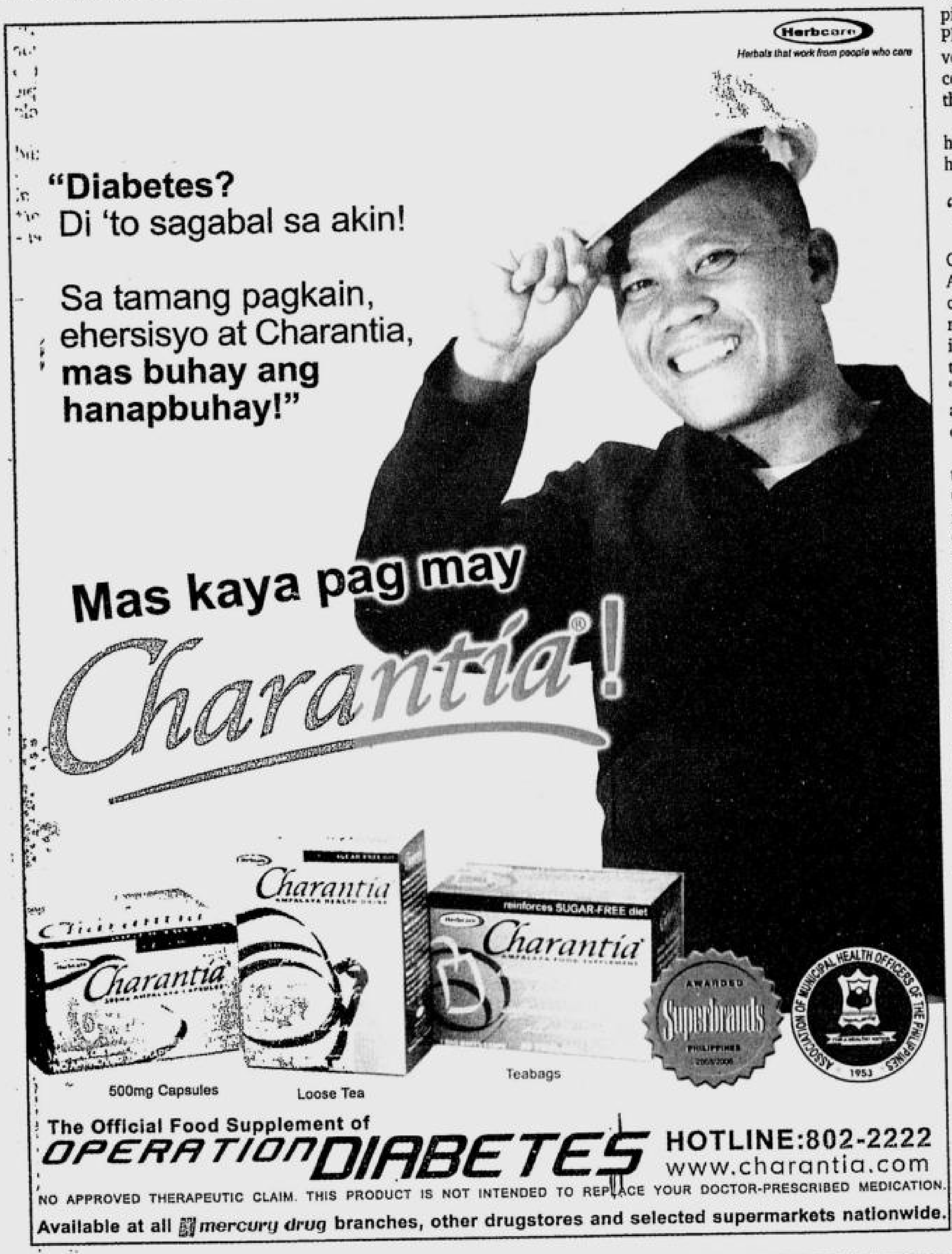
mbballoguing@hotmail.com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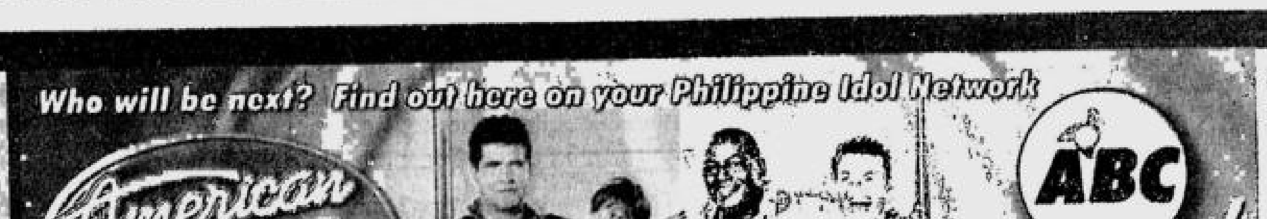
TV GUIDE
Wednesday, April 26, 2006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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)	National Geographic	PBA				Sentro
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World
AXN		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Record Setters		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		The 4400	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons	
Cinema One		Johnny Tiosso And The Proud Beauty				Nasaan Ka Man			
Cinemax		Hercules And Circle Of Fire				Jawbreaker (4:50 PM)			Reality Bites (6:20 PM)
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport
Crime/Suspense		The Closer		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence
Discovery Channel		Blueprint For Disaster		American Chopper		Great Quakes		Stormproof	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04 Stars Billiards C'ships		Pool World Pool Masters 2001		X-Games Files '04		Motorsport Asia	Table Tennis '04 [illegible] C'ships
ETC		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil	
EWTN	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Faith In Motion	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Suffering And The Love Of God	EWTN Catholic Classic	The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto	
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	Le Robe de Mariage	24 Oras	
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV (3:15 PM)		I Was A Teenage Faust (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny
HBO	Real Women Have Curves			Win A Date With Tad Hamilton!			Uncle Buck (5:45 PM)		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Angelic Layer	Tokyo Underground	Metal Fighter Miku	Beyblade G-Revolution
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Heat		Velocity		X-Men	Street Smarts
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating With Style	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped
MTV Philippines		Laguna Beach	MTV Hits	Get Hitch'd	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Romance Specials	MTV Hits	
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX
National Geographic	Wild Family Secrets	Nat'l Geographic Specials		Hunter Hunted				Top 5 - About China	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas	Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Ray Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie
PBO			PS I Love You				Sa Kamay Ng [illegible]		
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zentrix	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window	Arangkada Extra Balita	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping	
Solar Sports						Swatch World Tour Men's Finals Salvador '05			NBA Jam
Sports Plus		Arena Football League							Wild Side
Star Movies				Target Of Opportunity			The Assassination Of Richard Nixon		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		American Idol		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle
Studio 23	Bewitched	Masked Rider Ryuki				Batman Beyond		Spirits	TBA

Channel	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Billboard On-Air	Insider
ABS-CBN 2		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Wonderful Life		S.O.C.O.			
AXN	PSI Factor (Season III)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	The Amazing Race (Season IX)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season II)	
Cartoon Network	Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One	Where D Girls Are			Persona	Gumapang Ka Sa Lusak (9:15 PM)		Araw-Araw, Gabi-Gabi			
Cinemax			Tripwire			Crash Landing			The Kiss (10:55 PM)	
CNN	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Exit Wounds				Bones	
Discovery Channel	Wild Discovery		Hour China		Battle Of Chernobyl				World's Strongest UFO Stories	
Disney Channel	That's So Raven That's So Trendy Wars	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon	Buzz on Maggie	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	2005 Kaohsiung World Pool C'ship				SportsCenter Asia	Classic Boxing: R. Duran vs. V. Pazienza II		Classic Boxing: All The Greatest		SportsCenter Asia
ETC	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars 2		Beauty & The Geek		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	The Inside Edition
ETC 2nd Avenue	NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Cold Turkey		NBC Nightly News	
EWTN	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	One In Their Heart: Holiness Of Priesthood	Parable	Rome Reports	EWTN Presents	
Fox News	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Family Law III		Missing II		Judging Amy		Dynasty: Behind The Sex, Greed And Manipulation			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO		Anacondas: The Hunt For The Blood Orchid			The Crew			Lethal Weapon		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Angelic Layer
IBC 13	[illegible] Ladies 9 Ball C'ship				ME TV		Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Mad TV			My Name Is Earl	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network	Food 911	E! Entertainment Special		Style Star	Martha		Fine Living Special		Isaac	
MTV Philippines	Get Spotted	Get Hitch'd	MTV Screen	MTV Hits	TRL		Laguna Beach	VH1 Presents: 40 Greatest Women of the Video Era		
MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic			About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials					
NBN			Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO		Untouchable Family				Bawaguero	Balikbayan		Irene	Nakaw na Sandali
Qtv	Irene	Noel	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	Now Na!		News On Q				Over The Green Fields
RPN 9	NBA Playoffs 1st Round				Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Basketball Show		Kerygma
SBN 21	Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports	Sagupaan	NBA TV 2006 NBA All Star Saturday						Sportsdesk	Denmark Open Mixed Doubles Finals	
Sports Plus	NASCAR Subway Fresh 500 Phoenix						World Game	[illegible] Tunervision 8	World's Greatest Auto Shows	
Star Movies	The Quest Of My [illegible] (7:10 PM)				The Librarian: Quest For The Spear			Out Of Reach (10:40 PM)		
Star World	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	American Idol		Grey's Anatomy		Smallville		Seinfeld	American Idol
Studio 23	Wazzup Wazzup	The Amazing Race Family Edn		CSI (8:20 PM)	24 Season 4 (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A17

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Farmer leader slain in Davao del Norte

By Blanche S. Rivera

ANOTHER FARMER LEADER was gunned down in a public market in Davao del Norte Monday night, becoming the fourth agrarian reform activist to be killed this month alone.

Enrico Cabanit, secretary general of the Pambansang Uganayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (Unorka) and a farmer representative of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, died from four gunshot wounds in the head that practically blew off his skull.

His daughter Daffodil, 23, was also shot in the chest and back. She is still in critical condition in a hospital in Tagum City. One of her lungs has given out as of press time.

The two were buying food for dinner at the Panabo public market when two unidentified men in a motorcycle shot them around 6:10 p.m.

"We hold accountable the DAR for his death. It should have resolved the agrarian reform problem in the Floirendo lands a long time ago, but there was no political will," Unorka national council member Evangeline Mendoza said in a press conference in Quezon City yesterday.

Cabanit, 54, known among peasant organizations as "Ka Eric," was a retrenched worker of the Floirendo banana plantation in Davao and has been organizing farmers to push for the distribution of Floirendo lands in Mindanao.

Two hours before he was killed, Cabanit and his daughter attended a dialogue between farmers and officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform, led by Undersecretary Narciso Nieto Jr., on agrarian reform cases in Mindanao.

The meeting ended at 4:30 p.m. with a commitment from Nieto that the DAR would send a technical team to Davao.

JOAN BONDOC/PDI PHOTO

EVANGELINE Mendoza, a colleague of Cabanit, cries on the shoulder of another colleague, Erik Reyes, prior to a press conference to announce Cabanit's killing.

Bishops step up fight vs 'jueteng' alternative

By Christian V. Esguerra

ANOTHER ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP HAS REjected the government's Small Town Lottery (STL).

Bishop Socrates Villegas of Balanga, Bataan yesterday issued a pastoral letter categorically saying that he didn't want STL—the government's apparent legalized alternative to "jueteng"—to operate anywhere in his diocese.

The letter, written in Filipino, was to be read in all parishes during Mass and in barangays during Bible services with Holy Communion on April 29 and 30.

"Small Town Lottery is debasing the heroism that we all want for Bataan," Villegas wrote, noting that the province was often referred to as a "cradle of heroes."

Archbishop Paciano Aniceto earlier similarly condemned STL, the brainchild of Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, and warned the government against introducing it within his pastoral jurisdiction.

Villegas expressed alarmed over the supposed proliferation in the province of gambling dens which he described as the "source of corruption in government."

"They become addictive until people start forgetting about their children because the money that they are supposed to spend for food and education is wasted in gambling," he lamented.

"They teach laziness instead of diligence, they bring deceit instead of honesty."

Villegas urged the faithful to remember government officials responsible for spreading gambling in the province in the next elections.

"Remember their betrayal," he said. "They're not supposed to lead this province whose people strive to be heroes. They are our enemies."

"Let us not lose steam in standing by what is right. Let us fight every obstacle to the heroism and holiness of Bataan."

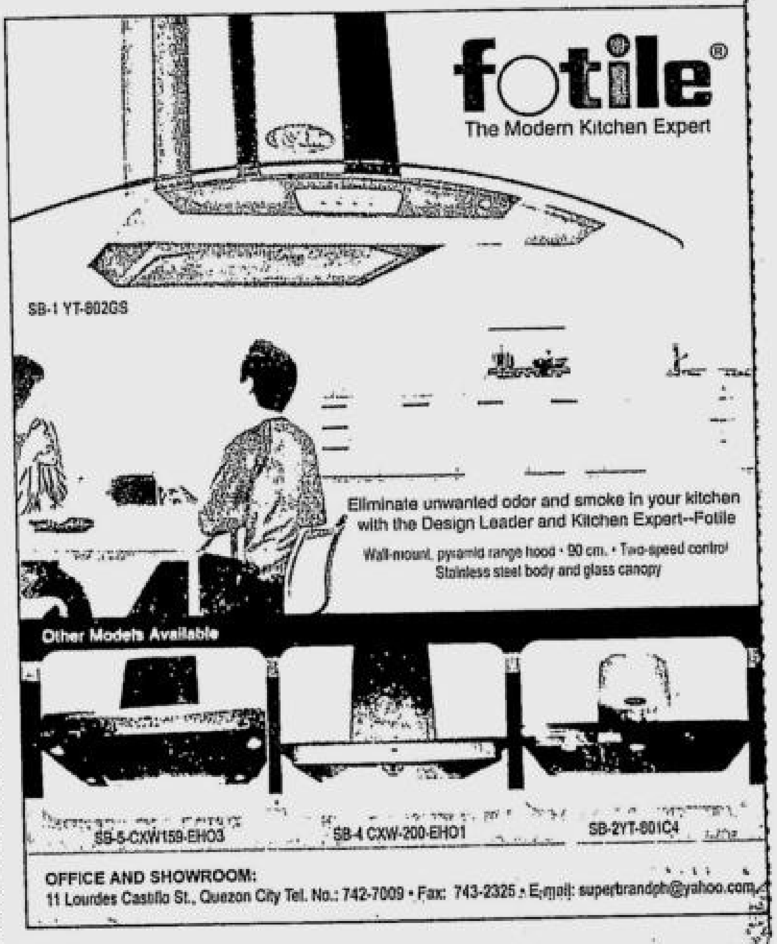
Earlier, Archbishop Aniceto said he has instructed the archdiocese's Social Action Center of Pampanga (Sacop) to seek the cancellation of the license obtained by a private company to operate STL in the province.

Aniceto, chair of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on Family and Life, said that while the state-sanctioned lottery was legal, "we do not approve of such arrangements."

According to him, the new game could not offer decent jobs to thousands of displaced jueteng employees, breeding also the wrong value on reliance on chance than on hard work.

"A life that is full, that promotes authentic human development should be the vision of the government. I hope this is the orientation and direction of our government so that the quality of life of the people would be improved," Aniceto told the INQUIRER here on Sunday.

"Our stand is that there should be other sources of good jobs. Although [STL] is legal, not all legal is moral," he said. *With a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



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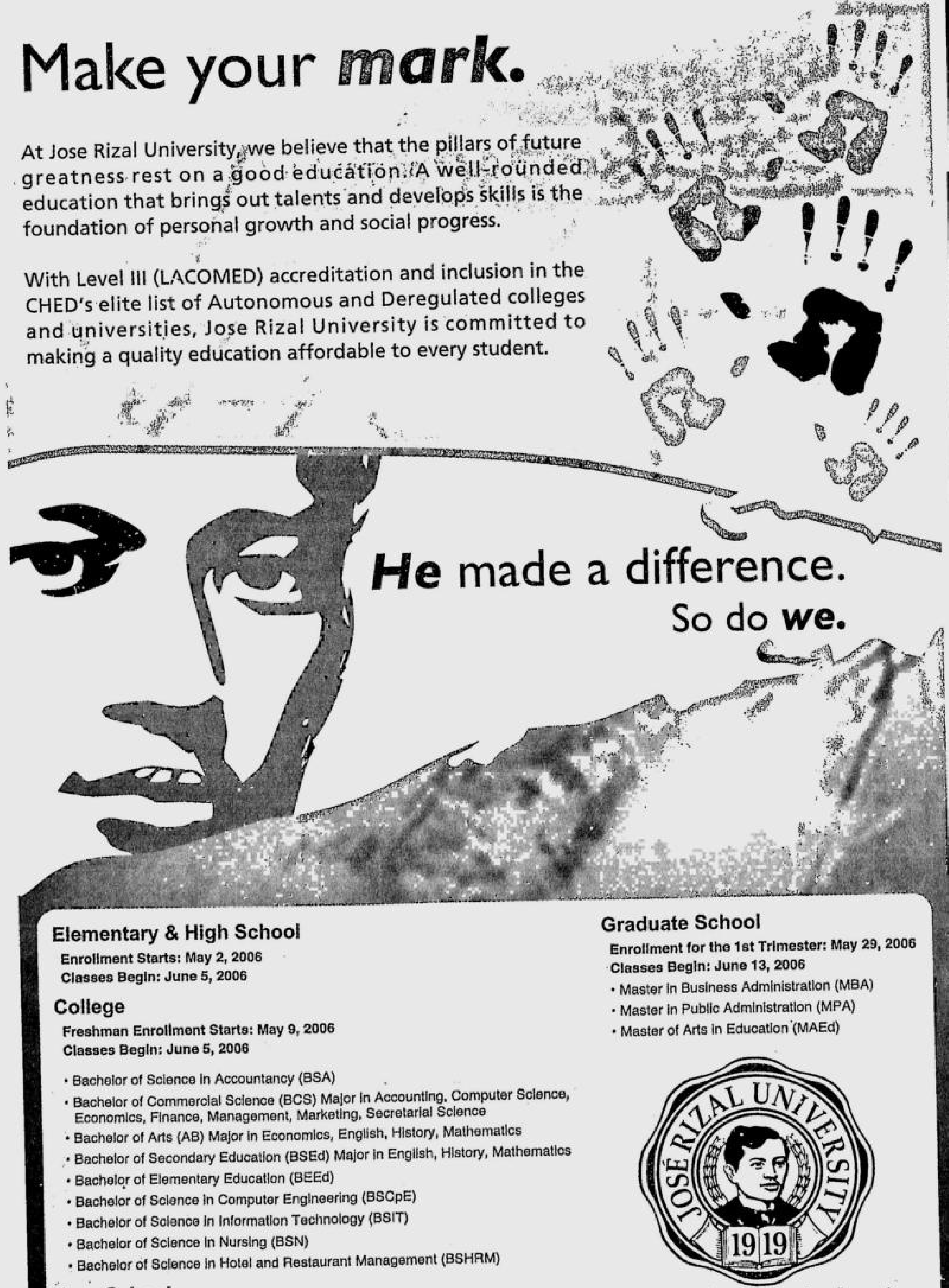

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Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines

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April 11, 2006, 8:30 a.m.,
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Hospital closure pits Mayor Vi vs Batangas gov

ALEX PAL/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

FRIGHT OF PASSAGE
The two boys being circumcised in a hospital in Dumaguete City dared not look at the operation being performed on them and did not see the smiles on the faces of the doctors who are performing the boys' rite of passage.

LIPA CITY—LIPA CITY MAYOR VILMA SANTOS assailed Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez over his plan to close a public hospital here.

During the weekly flag-raising ceremony, the movie actress-turned-politician voiced her opposition to the impending closure of the Lipa District Hospital in Barangay Siete, which is being run and funded by the provincial government.

In front of some 500 employees, Santos said she could not understand why the governor pushed for the shutting down of the hospital when many residents of Lipa and nearby towns benefit from its services.

She said if the financial status was the real problem, the city government can easily make adjustments to salvage the hospital from permanent closure.

"If politics is the only reason, I am ready to fight them," Santos was quoted as telling the crowd.

City Hall employees and officials interviewed by the INQUIRER said Santos' speech drew loud cheers from the crowd which backed the mayor's stand on the issue.

Many saw the incident as the start of a political fallout between Santos and Sanchez, a well-known ally of Santos' husband, administration Sen. Ralph Recto.

Employees said Sanchez, who was identified in a Senate hearing as one of the biggest jueteng lords in the country, might have wanted to get back at Santos after she reportedly showed her interest in running for governor in the 2007 local elections.

In an interview at her office, Santos clarified that her speech was never meant to challenge the governor to an election showdown or to start a political fight between them.

She said when she said she was ready to fight Sanchez, it was over the hospital closure.

"I don't have any intention to make this a political issue ... When I said I'm ready to fight (Sanchez), what I meant was I'm ready to fight for the (LDH) and let the people know the real issue," the mayor said.

Santos, however, admitted that she was irked after learning from Board Member Marc Leviste that the original plan was to close the hospital on May 6. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Solon fires gun in air over disagreement on where to park plane

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—A DISAGREEMENT over an area where a chartered plane should park led Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan Jr. to fire his rifle in the air, causing a stir among personnel of the Laoag International Airport.

Witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Ablan was allegedly furious that the plane was not allowed to park in front of the terminal building where it would be convenient for passengers to get off.

Reached by phone, Ablan admitted he was at the airport on Saturday to welcome his guests on board a chartered flight.

He said the guests, who included a Russian ambassador and a civil aviation executive, came from Metro Manila and were in Laoag purportedly to attend Ablan's birthday celebration.

"Yes, I fired a shot in the air but only to get the attention of the pilot who was maneuvering the plane toward an area which was not designated to be the parking site," he said.

According to Ablan, an airport ground marshal started to signal that the plane was supposed to park in front of the airport's terminal building.

But the pilot apparently missed the signal and instead went to an area farther from the terminal building, he said.

"I had to signal the pilot by firing a gun because he was already parking in another area. I wanted him to park near the terminal building so that the passengers would not have to walk far. It was nearly noon and the sun's heat was punishing," he said.

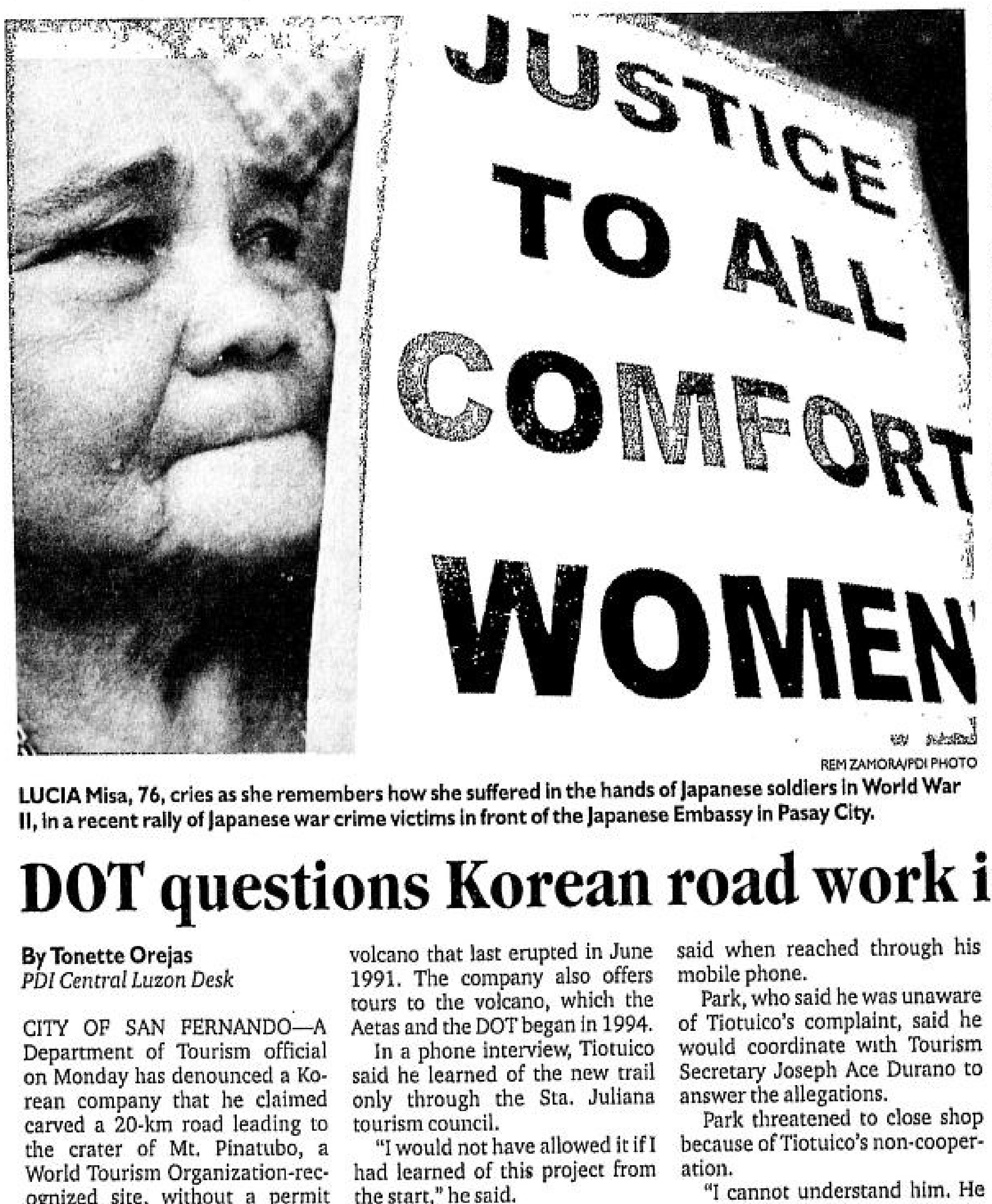
"I did not fire at the aircraft. I fired in the air and toward the sea. I did not intend to cause a commotion except that I wanted the pilot to park in an area where he was supposed to park."

Ablan said he did not intend to cause an incident at the airport, referring to previous events that prompted the Philippine Airlines to cancel its flights to Laoag.

"I am the least person to be making incidents like these. I merely wanted to get the pilot's attention," he said.

Ablan, through his congressional budget, has facilitated the upgrading of the Laoag airport by providing funds for the construction of a terminal building annex and expansion of the airport's runway among others.'

PAL abandoned the Laoag-Manila-Laoag route in February and blamed the supposed harassment that PAL personnel experienced on a supposed argument with former Laoag Mayor Roger Fariñas over a boarding pass.



REM ZAMORA/PDI PHOTO

LUCIA Misa, 76, cries as she remembers how she suffered in the hands of Japanese soldiers in World War II, in a recent rally of Japanese war crime victims in front of the Japanese Embassy in Pasay City.

Survivors of Japanese sex slave camp in world war get help from SC chief

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CANDABA, PAMPANGA—SURVIVORS of a mass rape here by Japanese soldiers in 1944 grabbed the chance on Sunday to seek help from Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, a native of this town.

All dressed in yellow baro't saya, the old women quietly approached the country's top magistrate shortly after the Candaba government honored him in a tribute.

Panganiban did not turn them away, inviting all the 20 members of their group, the Malaya Lola (Free Grandmothers) to join him in the feast laid out for his homecoming.

At the informal meeting, their spokesperson Isabelita Vinuya told him of their group's "difficult quest for justice."

The formal apology and reparation from the Japanese government have not come since they began seeking these in 1996 when they broke their silence over the abuse, the 72-year-old Vinuya said.

The old women also informed Panganiban of their pending case before the Department of Justice since 2004. They said they wanted the DOJ to declare the Nov. 23, 1944 mass rape, the mass killing of men and boys as well as the pillage in their village, Mapanique, as war crimes.

Without commenting on the incident or on the DOJ's action, Panganiban clarified he has no jurisdiction over the DOJ, an office under President Macapagal-Arroyo.

He advised them to instead write an appeal to the President through her special assistant, lawyer Carlos de Leon, and through her secretary, lawyer Erlinda de Leon. The husband and wife were present in the tribute and in the feast.

Mayor Jerry Pelayo arranged a meeting. A few minutes later, Erlinda de Leon was seen talking with the Malaya Lola leaders. A letter, they agreed, would be sent to Ms Arroyo.

Vinuya told reporters that the last time they sought the help of Ms Arroyo was in 1997 when she was still a senator. She said they remained hopeful that "she would really act on our behalf this time."

Only 62 of them are still alive, half of whom have been weakened by age and ailments. At least 28 have died in the last 10 years.

Japanese activists have pushed the sex slavery victims reparation bill, with 81 Japanese legislators filing on March 29, according to the Pagkakaisa ng Kababaihan (Kaisa-Ka), which has been helping the old women obtain justice.

On the campaign of American activists, United States legislators accepted on April 4 House Resolution No. 759 that expressed their sentiment that the Japanese government "should formally acknowledge and accept responsibility for its sexual enslavement of young women."

DOT questions Korean road work in Pinatubo

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A Department of Tourism official on Monday has denounced a Korean company that he claimed carved a 20-km road leading to the crater of Mt. Pinatubo, a World Tourism Organization-recognized site, without a permit from any government agency.

In a travel advisory posted on Monday, Ronaldo Tiotuico, DOT Central Luzon director, said his office has "vigorously registered its strong and unequivocal objection" to the road project by the PDC Development Corp. (PDCDC). The road runs from Capas, Tarlac, to Botolan, Zambales.

The firm was the first private company to have invested in the area, running the Mt. Pinatubo Spa Town in Barangay Sta. Juliana, the nearest gateway to the volcano that last erupted in June 1991. The company also offers tours to the volcano, which the Aetas and the DOT began in 1994.

In a phone interview, Tiotuico said he learned of the new trail only through the Sta. Juliana tourism council.

"I would not have allowed it if I had learned of this project from the start," he said.

Aside from not coordinating with the DOT, the company did not obtain an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources or a free and prior informed consent certificate (FPIC) from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Tiotuico said.

Cris Park, PDCDC president, said the project was approved by Mayor Reynaldo Catacutan and the Capas town council.

"We built the road to provide development in the area," Park said when reached through his mobile phone.

Park, who said he was unaware of Tiotuico's complaint, said he would coordinate with Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano to answer the allegations.

Park threatened to close shop because of Tiotuico's non-cooperation.

"I cannot understand him. He was not helping us," he said.

Francisco Villena Jr., the company's operations chief, said the trail merely revived an old logging road in the area. Villena confirmed the "minimal side-cutting" of hills to restore the road but denied that the entire stretch or any portion of it was concreted or bulldozed.

According to Villena, this route allows tourists to reach the crater in just 30 or 40 minutes. He said the regular route via the O'Donnell River in Crow Valley takes about seven hours to hurdle.

Catacutan said he and other local officials initiated the road project to boost the town's tourism program.

He said PDCDC did not need a DENR permit because what was rehabilitated was an old road built by the United States Air Force that maintained a radar and training station at Crow Valley.

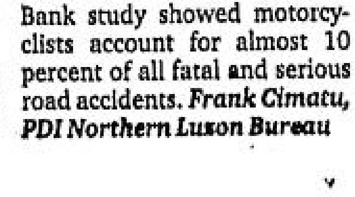
"We just removed big boulders and [some] trees in the path. The soil is stable," Catacutan said.

The mayor said local NCIP representatives and the heirs of Don Antonio Aquino, among them former vice presidential candidate Hermie Aquino, gave consent to the project. The Aquinos own the land traversed by the project.

The Philippine Air Force, which has jurisdiction over the area, has been consulted, Catacutan said.

Tourism-related activities, he said, have helped the Aetas and upland farmers in Capas cope with the effects of Mt. Pinatubo's eruption.

Sales of scooters up as gas prices rise


MURA NA, MABILIS PA!

VIGAN CITY—BECAUSE OF surging oil prices, Filipinos are turning to motorcycles and scooters for transport.

Francis Rivera, president of the National Federation of Motorcycle Clubs of the Philippines (NFMCP), said about 50,000 motorcycles and scooters are being bought every month.

He said close to 3.5 million Filipinos own motorcycles or scooters compared to only 1.1 million four years ago. He said Filipinos preferred motorcycles and scooters because these are more economical.

The problem, however, is that some new motorcyclists do not follow safety procedures and accidents occur, he said.

A 2004 Asian Development Bank study showed motorcyclists account for almost 10 percent of all fatal and serious road accidents. ***Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Rice festival forges peace in Kalinga

By Ikin Salvador
Contributor

THE PEOPLE OF Tinglayan town in Kalinga have maintained traditional farming despite the popular use of fertilizer and modern techniques of agriculture in the Cordillera.

Through traditional farming, they nurture the "*unoy*," an upland red rice variety indigenous to the province and organically grown in the town's *payeo* (terraces).

Last week, Tinglayan staged an *unoy* festival to highlight the rituals performed in the growing, harvesting and milling of the rice variety and the customs associated with it.

Mayor Johnny Maymaya said in Tinglayan, rice symbolizes life and unity.

"*Nabaknang iti bagas, simbolo iti panagbiag, ken simbolo ti panagkakaisa* (Rice is abundant in Tinglayan. It is the symbol of life and a symbol for unity)," he said.

Aside from an agricultural feast, the celebration was a thanksgiving to Kabunian (god) for a bountiful harvest.

"It is surprising that the people here never experience the *urat* or extreme hunger, despite the small plots owned by traditional farmers in raising *unoy* compared to [people in] other provinces that have [several] hectares of land for planting rice but who go hungry," said Maximo Garning, 54.

Fertility

The traditional farming of *unoy* produced the same volume of rice through time. It also sustained the fertility of the soil through natural irrigation and ingrained the value of conserving the environment among the people.

KUYKUYKUY, a tug of war and indigenous game in Kalinga is usually seen or performed during the harvest season. EV ESPIRITU

Maymaya said the festival also became a venue for cooperation and unity among the different groups in Tinglayan and held to break the image of the town as the "war zone" of tribal groups in central Cordillera.

Dr. Rey Cruz, Tinglayan health officer, said he had witnessed how people from different warring groups hacked each other in the past.

"People now have changed and have realized that tribal conflicts do not bring them any good," Cruz said.

Twenty villages participated in the *lalagsak* (cultural presentations) that featured indigenous dances, chants (*ugayam* and *ullalim*), music, storytelling and prayers from the elders.

"*Mayat daytoy tapno maipakita daigidiay aramid kadagiti dumadakkel* (Occasions like these are good so we could show the customs of the past to the younger generation)," said Ligaya Agalang, 34.

The festival featured the *ab'afa* or indigenous games such as *manchiot* (log splitting), *sang-sangkor* (arm wresting), *kuykuykuy* (tug of war) and *manfayo* (palay pounding). A trade exhibition of indigenous crafts and agricultural products was also held.

The search for "Mr. and Ms Unoy" featured the traditional costumes of the Kalinga and an innovation of the native attire today.

The search's talent portion showed the *ug-ugma* (traditional practices) performed by the Kalinga elders like the chanting of the *mandadawak* (healer), *pattong* (gong playing), *ullalim* and *ugayam*, and playing of the nose flute, among other things.

A participant voiced the pride of the Kalinga when he shouted: "*Haan yon chau liflifatan nan uchali* (We should not forget the traditional practices of our elders)."

Natural attractions

Apart from its rich culture and tradition, Tinglayan boasts of natural attractions for visitors.

The town's tourism code, said tourism officer Noel Macaiba, promotes eco-tourism.

Among the town's attractions are the "Sleeping Beauty" mountain, a favorite destination of climbers; kayaking at the 14-km stretch of the Chico River from Bugnay to Ambato; and trekking to Palang-ah waterfalls and Aatongan hot springs.

Festival organizers and local officials have also encouraged a home stay program for visitors so they can experience village life and Kalinga hospitality.

Bataan communities help give life to turtles

By Tonette Orejas
Bagac, Bataan

LIFE IS THE GIFT THAT endangered marine turtles get from a 500-meter long cove in the remote town of Bagac, Bataan, off the South China Sea.

Uniquely, too, it is business that is at the forefront of local conservation and rescue tasks in the town.

Quietly and with remarkable results, the Montemar Beach Club Inc. released 1,394 baby turtles during the 2004-2005 nesting season and another 4,586 as of Jan. 26 this year, hatchery records verified by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed.

Also in the last three years, records showed that Montemar nurtured to good health 15 Olive Ridleys (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), four Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and a Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) that fishermen in Bagac rescued at sea or found entangled in their nets.

These migratory species were tagged with metal bands and then released to the South China Sea.

When the INQUIRER visited Bagac on April 8, two young Hawksbill turtles were swimming at the pond of the company's "pawikan sanctuary" fronting the cove.

"They're still too small (40 centimeters in shell size) to be tagged," said Victoria Gonzales, Montemar president.

Turtle's presence

Sometime in February 2003, Montemar director Francisco Garcia and several lifeguards noticed hatchlings crawling on the sand, said company finance officer Zenaida Ragel.

Dan Torres and Renato Cruz of the DENR's Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, who were called in to assess the discovery, confirmed that the resort's cove in Sitio Pasinay at Barangay Pag-asa is a nesting site for various species of turtles.

Ragel, who also works with the Community and Environment Management Initiative, a nongovernment organization in Bagac, said more turtles could have been returning because at their 20 or 30-year maturing cycle, they were ready to hatch eggs at the exact site where they were born.

RESIDENTS of Bagac, Bataan release turtles caught in the waters off the town at the Montemar Beach. Resort officials and residents have joined hands to save and nurture the gentle sea creatures in the town's beaches. JOE GALVEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

Rogelio Trinidad, deputy director of the DENR's Protected Areas, Wildlife, Coastal Zones and Marine Services in Central Luzon, said mature turtles returned to where they were born because as hatchlings, they registered the magnetic fields of sand where they first crawled to life.

"The conversion of these coastal areas into residential estates and resorts disorient marine turtles and have caused a marked decline in the number of marine turtles returning to nest," Trinidad said.

Montemar, according to Gonzales, did not want to displace the turtles now reclaiming their nesting places at the cove.

The company, she said, realized that the work needed to also involve the communities because the lifeguards, who are residents in the area, reported that the trade of turtle eggs thrived in nearby communities.

A similar project in Barangay Nagbalayong in Morong town, which the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement began seven years ago, proved to be an inspiration that the work could be done, said former Bataan Vice Gov. Rogelio Roque, a Montemar director.

A similar effort by the Environment Protection of Asia is ongoing in San Antonio, Zambales.

Gonzales said the company was confident that it could embark on the project. By then, it had turned itself around from a rundown resort after years of neglect, Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 and a labor dispute later.

Communities

The company then asked Torres, Cruz, DENR personnel and Bagac Mayor Armando Ramos to help in the information campaigns and conservation workshops for the coastal residents.

For the 25th anniversary of the company in 2005, Gonzales suggested that instead of partying, they would save the money to build the sanctuary.

The 7 meter by 5 meter shelter, enclosed by nets and built away from the busy, noisy part of the 11-hectare resort, is where the eggs are transferred, re-buried and protected during the a 45-day hatching period. The eggs are laid between October and February.

"We released them (hatchlings) within 24 hours because the longer you put them in captivity, the more [they will] lose their sense of survival," Gonzales said.

"I did not know this was going to succeed. But on the first year I was very happy. Poachers from [the village of] Saysayin began to bring some of the eggs to us. They were beginning to be consciously aware [of the need to protect the turtles]," she said.

Not all the eggs were turned in, though. The illegal trade went on where a piece fetches P8-P15 due to their supposed medicinal or aphrodisiac benefits.

Alternative livelihood

Gonzales understood that the trade was due to "*kahirapan ng buhay*" (poverty) and to be able to put an end to this, there should be some alternative livelihood to wean them away from selling the eggs. Half of the problem is on the consumers' side, she said.

She said to help the conservation project, she has convinced former beauty queen Margie Moran, one of the producers of the play "We're Still Hot!" to make the play's April 28 run a benefit show for the *pawikan* project.

This is the first time that Gonzales, an urbanite most of her life, has been so passionate about nature.

"My satisfaction comes from the knowledge that we're helping preserve endangered species, contributing to efforts not to see them obliterated from the face of the earth," she said.

Then, too, the smiles on children's faces during their visits to the sanctuary or during events when the turtles are released to the sea are reasons to get the work going.

"Turtles bring happiness to the children. *Tuwang-tuwang sila* (They're are elated by it)," she said.

Aside from having a sense of involving people, Gonzales has taken her advocacy to the Bagac-Morong Beach Resorts Association. The 22 resort owners are now working to turn Bataan the "*pawikan* coastline of Central Luzon."

LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

PARKING AREA
'Calesas,' or horse drawn carriages that used to be the main mode of transportation in the country before the advent of motorized vehicles, use a spot near the St. Paul Metropolitan Cathedral in Vigan City as a parking area.

Benguet burial sites sacred, visitors told

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE province's mountains and burial grounds have always been open for tourism, but officials are reminding visitors and climbers to avoid activities that could desecrate the sites.

"Most of the sites are located in indigenous parks or communities where customary laws are observed. Visitors are thus asked to behave properly," said Clarita Prudencio, provincial tourism operations officer.

This summer, trekkers and mountaineers continue to explore the province's popular climbing destinations—Mt. Pulag, the country's second highest peak, in Kabayan town; Mt. Ugo in Itogon; Mt. Takadang in Kibungan; and Mt. Kabunian in Bakun.

Kabayan is the most popular among visitors because of mummies preserved in its burial caves.

Benguet is now determined to push its natural and cultural wealth for tourism to fill in the losses being experienced by its two major industries, mining and agriculture, Prudencio said.

Local records showed that the province had hosted a growing number of tourist arrivals—34,071 in 2003, 39,445 in 2004 and 35,073 from January to June 2005.

For the rest of 2005 and this year, figures are still not available. But Prudencio said field reports had been encouraging, particularly when the province staged the "Adivay" last year.

Adivay is a festival of customs and products that featured photographs of previously unseen sites in Benguet.

The province has 107 existing, emerging and potential tourist and development areas that can boost its bid to become a major tourist destination in Northern Luzon, Prudencio said.

The sites include previously unseen waterfalls, rice terraces, hot springs, and panoramic mountaintops.

But for the province's four major tribes—Ibaloi, Kankanaey, Ikarao and Kalanguya—the mountains are inhabited by gods who must not be disturbed, Prudencio said.

"Visitors and mountain climbers must not disturb their peace by bringing in liquor, partying, creating much noise or blaring sounds, and trying to take as souvenirs bones and relics they may find at the sites," she said.

In places where there is a *ngilin* (period of abstinence), visiting couples are advised not to mate, she said. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

GMA advises Panay execs to focus on tourism

By Jo Martinez-Clemente
PDI Visayas Bureau

PANDAN, ANTIQUE—STRESSING that the "unifying economy of Panay Island is tourism," President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday urged local and national officials to redo the Panay Island Development Plan and focus on tourism.

The President also urged the World Bank's International Financial Corp., which is funding the Boracay Masterplan, to include the entire Panay Island, especially the northern towns of Antique.

Ms Arroyo said she wanted Panay to become another Bali, a world-famous tourist destination in Indonesia.

Bali became the tourism center of Indonesia because the economic plans of the island were redirected to tourism, she said.

She said she would ask former tourism secretary Mina Gabor, who is in charge of the IFC-WB Boracay master plan, to include the entire Panay as an expansion area of Boracay.

Since income from Boracay, the country's top tourist destination because of its powdery white sands and clear waters, outweighs the region's agricultural income, Ms Arroyo said economic development plans for the region should be directed toward tourism as Panay's unifying economy.

The expansion of the Boracay Masterplan to cover Panay, according to Ms Arroyo, is now easier than before as the necessary road networks have been completed and the nautical highway, through the roll on-roll off transport system, has been developed and made the northern Panay towns accessible.

What completes the formula is the "warm and friendly people" of Antique, the President added.

To show how other economic sectors can align their plans with tourism, Ms Arroyo distributed checks worth P85,000 each to the first eight of 114 muscovado millers here so they can upgrade their facilities and churn out export quality or sediment-free muscovado.

She said local products of Panay, such as muscovado, should replace Indonesian-made goods that are being sold in tourist shops in Boracay.

Muscovado, better know as the "healthy sugar," is produced without chemicals and through centuries-old processes.

Antique is traditionally known as the country's "Muscovado Capital." Export demands, however, could not be sustained because millers need to upgrade their muscovado mills to produce sediment-free sugar.

Zilla Teruel, director of the Department of Science and Technology for Western Visayas, said the financial assistance was intended for the installation of cooling and settling tanks in the traditional setup of the muscovado mills.

The President also turned over to the Northern Antique District Hospital an ambulance, as well as 25 education vouchers, to the Department of Education here so that students who cannot be accommodated in the public high schools of Antique can enroll in private schools with government subsidy.

ROUNDUP

Vice mayor held

HIRAM!
HINDE!

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—National Bureau of Investigation agents arrested Vice Mayor Jerry Pasigian of Alfonso Castañeda town on Saturday for allegedly stealing the car of Mayor Alfredo Castillo Jr. Pasigian was attending a wedding with his family when NBI agents arrested him based on the complaint of Castillo. The mayor accused Pasigian of stealing his Mitsubishi Pajero on April 13 while it was parked in front of his house. Pasigian, who was detained at the NBI district office here, denied the allegation. He said Castillo lent his car to him in November last year. *Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

2 soldiers killed

LEGAZPI CITY—Two soldiers were killed and an unidentified person was wounded during a clash between 15 New People's Army rebels and government soldiers at Sitio Magcasili, Barangay Mauraro in Guinobatan, Albay on Sunday. Killed were Privates First Class Jayson Labarbio and Allan Solomon. The gunfight lasted for about 10 minutes. The rebels withdrew toward Sitio Libas, Barangay Maguiron in the same town. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Truck kills man

LEGAZPI CITY—A truck sideswiped a man along the main highway at about noon on Sunday at Barangay Loba-loba, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. The victim, a certain Tobias Estrada, 52, of the same place, was killed instantly. The driver, Jose Rey Maternal, is now in police custody. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

24 colleges to hike fees

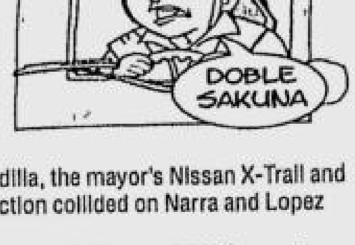
LEGAZPI CITY—The Commission on Higher Education has approved increases in tuition in 24 private colleges in Bicol this coming school year. The increases range from 8 percent to 25 percent, or an average of 14 percent equivalent to P77.55 per unit. None among the state universities and colleges will increase tuition due to a memorandum by CHEd chair Carlito Puno on March 30 to make education more accessible to a greater number of Filipinos.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Gang head's aide slain

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—An aide of Pentagon kidnap gang leader Tahir Alonto was killed in a scuffle with a policeman on Wednesday. Chief Supt. Danilo Mangila, Central Mindanao police chief, Mindong Latip, alias Commander Tumindig, tried to escape Wednesday dawn while under custody. He said Latip grabbed the firearm of the policeman guarding him, but the latter resisted. The firearm "accidentally went off," resulting in the death of Latip. Latip, who carried a bounty of P175,000, arrested during a raid in Tacurong City on Monday. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Fire truck rams mayor's SUV



BACOLOD CITY—Cadiz City Mayor Salvador Escalante Jr. was hurt recently when his sports utility vehicle was rammed by a fire truck that was responding to an alarm here. Mayor Escalante was brought to the Bacolod Adventurist Hospital with a broken left leg. His father Salvador Sr. and wife Mariel suffered minor cuts. They were brought to the hospital but were released immediately.
According to traffic investigator Roy Badilla, the mayor's Nissan X-Trail and the fire truck of the Bureau of Fire Protection collided on Narra and Lopez Jaena Streets.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

800 Negros health workers start getting hazard pay

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE MORE than 800 health workers in Negros Oriental have started receiving their much-awaited hazard pay, retroactive January.

Integrated provincial health officer Ely Villapando said that the health workers received their hazard pay equivalent to half of the 25 percent of their basic pay.

Under Republic Act No. 7305, or the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers, government health workers are entitled to a hazard pay, which is 25 percent of their basic salary, to be given on a staggered basis, starting at 5 percent in 1999, 10 percent in 2000, 15 percent in 2001, 20 percent in 2002 and 25 percent by 2003 and onwards.

Provincial budget officer Marichu Apuerto said that more than P5 million had been allocated for the health workers' hazard pay from January to June.

It is not yet known when the provincial government would give the full amount of hazard pay to the health personnel.

The workers were at first unhappy that they were not getting their pay retroactive to 1999, but Villapando said he was able to pacify them, as the provincial government was trying its best to give them the benefits.

Alpuerto also said the benefits mandated by RA 7305 were subject to the availability of funds, but would be given priority.

She added that other benefits provided for in RA 7305, such as the P150 monthly laundry allowance and P1,500 monthly subsistence allowance, had long been given to the province's health workers. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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NUTRITION FACTS

Group wants honesty from fries, burgers

By Christian V. Esguerra

NUTRITIONAL CONTENT
AGR

WHAT CAN A QUARTER POUNDER THAT goes with fries and a huge glass of regular soft drink do to your health?

To be sure, this common fast food combination will jack up your daily calories. And if luck abandons you, you'll probably end up a hypertensive.

Lesson is: If your food won't do you any good, it should at least be honest with you.

This is part of the advocacy of a coalition of government and private agencies promoting healthy lifestyle among Filipinos.

The goal of the Philippine Coalition for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases is that, in two to three years, restaurants would start declaring the nutritional content of their menu.

It also wants food products sold in restaurants—burgers, fries, salads, and iced tea, for instance—to pass a set of standards for a healthy diet.

Things to avoid

These two strategies would allow customers to be better informed about the food they eat and give them good choices in the process, according to Frances Cuevas, program officer of the Department of Health's Degenerative Disease Office.

The DOH is part of the 39-member coalition that also includes the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, National Institute of Health Philippines, Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight and Obesity, and other local health societies.

"We are not the adversaries here," Cuevas told reporters after a press conference in Quezon City yesterday. "We just want to promote a healthy lifestyle for everybody."

Express food

She said the group was planning to come up with a certification program covering food products sold in restaurants. Products containing, say, a sticker from the coalition would alert consumers that they had passed screening and were a better choice than others.

Since last year, she said the coalition has been encouraging Filipinos to be conscious of their health, primarily by avoiding three basic risk factors—smoking, sedentary lifestyle, and unhealthy diet.

In its newsletter, the group noted that 19.6 percent of Filipino adults are overweight and 4.3 percent are obese, with 22.5 percent of the population afflicted with hypertension, 3.4 percent with diabetes, and 8.5 percent with high cholesterol levels.

Fast foods restaurants, which are heavily patronized by the public, are a key player in the campaign. The DOH earlier released a report showing that Filipinos today are more inclined to eat in these "express restaurants" than at home.

The coalition has been encouraging fast foods chains to re-evaluate their menu and provide more healthy choices.

The effects of the campaign are seen in restaurants now offering more salads and vegetables. Wendy's, for instance, has made available low-sugar iced tea and low-calorie mayonnaise, according to Dr. John Julliard Go of the World Health Organization.

Food options

The coalition has also targeted beverage companies, encouraging them to provide more alternatives to regular soft drinks.

A recent study in the Philippines by German nutritionist Alexandra showed that "soft drinks cause overweight and obesity," the group said in its newsletter.

"Consumers should be provided nutrition information and a wider range of healthier beverage and food options," the study suggested.

Alternative products

Cuevas noted that soft drinks companies are now producing alternatives like bottled water, juices, and even no-sugar beverages.

"The things that we're seeing now is part of the manifestation of the collaboration we have with these companies," she said.

RP tourism big victim of tsunami, ignorance

THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND JAPAN escaped the 2004 tsunamis which devastated much of Asia but some potential travelers believe otherwise, a survey released Tuesday found.

The poll of thousands of respondents across 10 global markets found that an average of 18 percent said several destinations untouched by the tragedy were still "severely or somewhat affected." AC Nielsen conducted the survey in March for Visa International and the Bangkok-based Pacific Asia Travel Association (Pata).

"The most common 'false positive' was the Philippines—identified by 50 percent of respondents as being affected," the survey said.

Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, Hong Kong, China and South Korea were also falsely identified as being hit by the December 2004 disaster, the results showed.

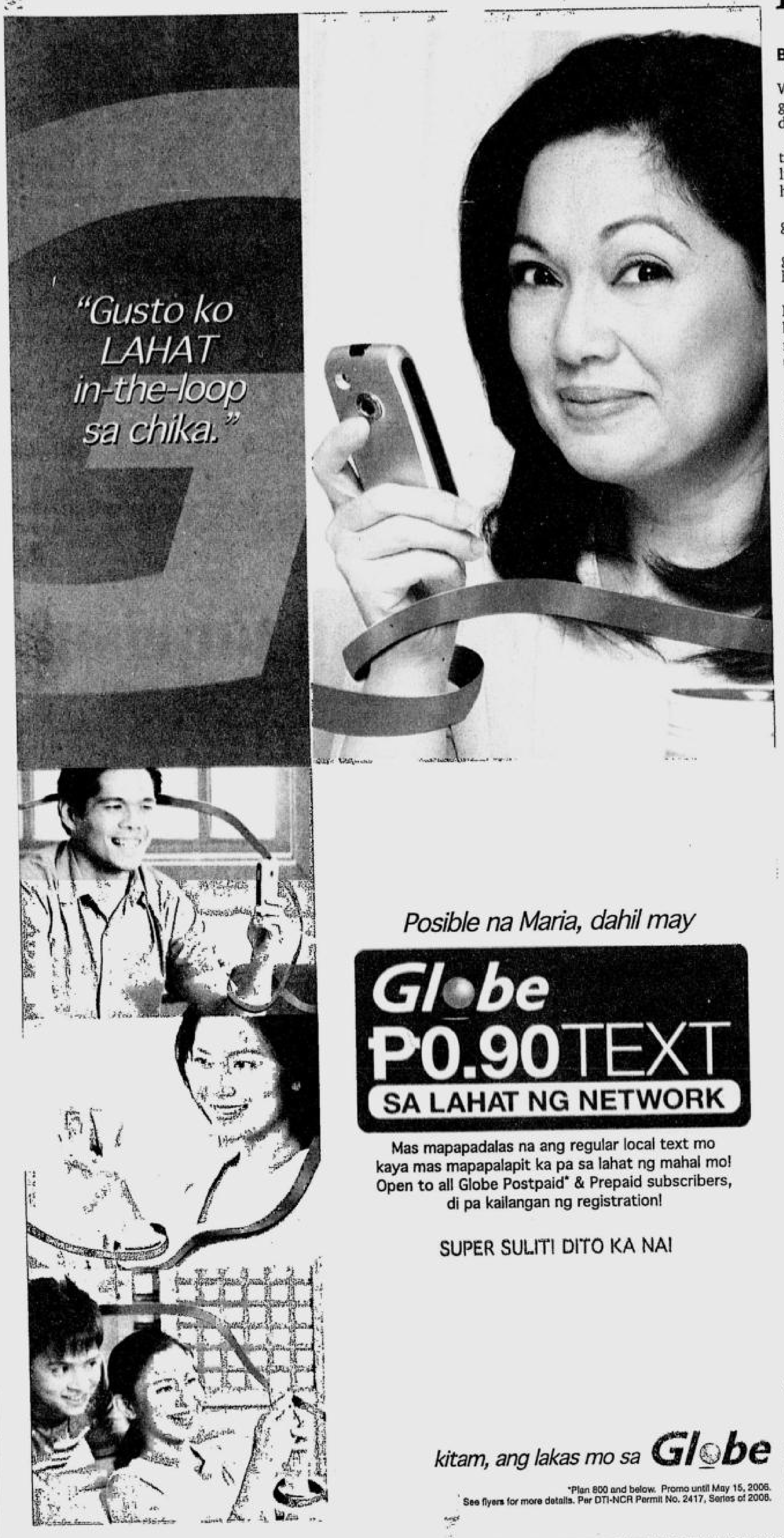
The tsunamis killed more than 220,000 people in the region, mostly in Indonesia but with significant casualties also in Sri Lanka, India and Thailand.

"Travelers' perceptions do not always reflect the reality of a situation, and ignorance is costing the industry billions," said Paul Dowling, Visa Asia Pacific's executive vice-president for corporate relations.

"Better consumer education would make a big difference, bringing billions of extra tourism dollars, particularly by the high-spending travelers, into Asia." The survey found one in five respondents was similarly misinformed about where "terrorism" has occurred in the region, and about one-third did not know which areas have been affected by bird flu.

Survey interviews were conducted online with 5,601 potential travelers from Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

AFP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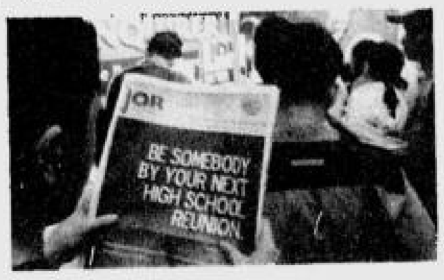
WHAT'S INSIDE

- Pasay policemen arrest 4 suspected jeepney thieves /A24


BE SOMEBODY BY YOUR NEXT HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

- Job seekers welcome at QC mega fair /A24
- Watch out for grandest fiesta ever on April 27 /A24

STL franchise holder seeks TRO vs QC mayor

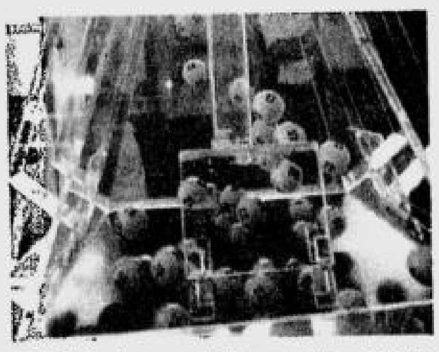
Firm claims ₱11 million in damages

BELMONTE: Not on my turf PDI PHOTO

By DJ Yap

THE HOLDER OF THE SMALL TOWN Lottery franchise in Quezon City yesterday asked the court to junk the cease-and-desist order issued by Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. which bars the company from operating the numbers game in the city.

In a petition filed before Judge Bernelito Fernandez of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 97, Benchmark Acquisition International Corp. asked the court to issue a temporary restraining order against Belmonte, business permit and licensing office chief Pacifico Maghacot Jr. and city police chief Nicasio Radovan Jr.



GAME had no permit to operate PDI PHOTO

The company also sought P11 million in damages, representing the losses it reportedly incurred as a result of Belmonte's order. Benchmark argued that the mayor lacked jurisdiction since the company was authorized by the PCSO to operate the STL in the city.

Policemen raided the Benchmark office at Prima Building on East Avenue last March 25 and three other outlets after Belmonte ordered all STL operations in the city stopped.

The police also arrested several employees of the company, along with officials of Benchmark and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Belmonte had said the STL should only be test run in cities where it was welcome. Benchmark also failed to get a permit, a requirement met by PCSO businesses in the city, he added.

Man shot dead after row over illegal electrical connection

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A MAN WAS SHOT DEAD IN TONDO, Manila, last Monday after he reprimanded another man who tried to tap his electrical connection.

Police identified the victim as Rizalito Mercado, 37, of 227 Area B, Gate 10, Parola Compound.

The suspect, Bong Cueto, who escaped after the incident, lived in Area B, Gate 8 in the same compound.

According to SPO1 Dennis Javier of the Manila Police District Homicide Section, Mercado had been shot four times.

Investigators said that on Sunday morning, Mercado had a heated argument with the suspect's alleged accomplice identified only as Willy as the latter was caught trying to install an illegal electrical connection.

Enraged, Mercado reportedly chased Willy with a knife.

Willy, however, escaped and reported the incident to the suspect, police said.

The following day, Marlene Usman, the victim's cousin, told the police she saw the suspect walk up to Mercado and shoot him in the alley behind his house.

The suspect then ran off.

Police recovered an empty cartridge of a caliber .38 revolver and another bullet at the crime scene. *With Erika Sauler, trainee*

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QC jobs fair set

ON MAY 1, Labor Day, employment opportunities await Quezon City residents in a "mega job fair" sponsored by the Department of Labor and Employment. Job seekers may drop off their resumes at the booths to be set up by 100 local firms and 50 overseas recruitment agencies from 8 a.m. to 5 a.m. at the City Hall's Risen Garden. A preemployment document processing service will also be available to applicants. Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. urged residents to take advantage of the program, saying the job fair could help improve the employment rate.

DJ Yap

Ban on cops at ports

MAS-LIGTAS PA KUNG GANYAN!

METRO Manila police chief Vidal Querol has banned all policemen in the metropolis from the city's seaports unless they have a written order from the Philippine Ports Authority. Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil of the Northern Police District yesterday said that Querol issued the order after receiving complaints from traders, forwarders and legitimate truckers about the alleged involvement of policemen in hijacking activities. The complaints were raised during the anti-hijacking meeting between police officials and trucking firm owners held recently, he added.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Pasay cops nab 4 jeep theft suspects

Estafa case led probers to quartet's trail in Southern Luzon

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A MAN WHO WAS ARRESTED FOR A petty crime in Pasay City turned out to be wanted for more serious offenses in Batangas.

Pasay policemen arrested Ronald Lontoc on Monday night after Lalaine Bautista sued him for estafa over a cellular phone.

However, an informant said that Lontoc was also wanted for stealing a jeepney and frustrated homicide in Lobo, Batangas, Chief Insp. Simon Gonzales, chief of the city's Criminal Investigation Division, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Gonzales said they verified the information with Lobo policemen and arrested later three other men believed to have acted as Lontoc's accomplices in the jeepney theft case.

The police officer identified the three as Victor Hernandez, Nestor Olanio and Renato Quiral.

The suspects are now detained at the Pasay detention cell.

Based on initial investigation, Lontoc and another suspect identified only as alias "Batang," stole a jeepney from gunpoint in Batangas last month. The two shot and wounded the driver and a boy, Gonzales said.

Lontoc reportedly sold the jeep for P50,000 to Hernandez who, in turn, brought the jeep to Olanio, a machinist in Cavite.

"Olanio was said to be known for removing the serial numbers of vehicles brought to his shop in Cavite," said Gonzales.

He added that Olanio was now being investigated for his possible involvement in previous car theft cases in Metro Manila. Quiral was allegedly Olanio's helper.

Lontoc will also be charged with violating the Anti-Fencing Law and two counts of frustrated murder in the Pasay City prosecutor's office.

Pasig City cites 17 environment-friendly companies

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ATER CLOSING DOWN A CHOCOLATE factory for alleged violation of antipollution regulations, the Pasig City Environment and Natural Resources recently handed out the "Gawad Kalikasan ng Pasig" award to 17 environment-friendly firms.

Cenro chief Raquel Naciongayo told the INQUIRER that this only showed that they also recognize responsible companies in the city.

The 17 firms were cited last week "for demonstrating an exemplary achievement in recycling, waste reduction, cleaner technologies and for implementing appropriate environmental management systems."

Two of the 17 companies were given the "Most Improved" award after they were able to comply with environmental requirements after receiving a warning from the Cenro.

The Cenro closed down last week the chocolate factory of Universal Robina Corp. in Barangay Bagong Ilog after receiving complaints from residents about the "unbearable" stench emitted by the plant.

Naciongayo said 12 more chemical, food and textile factories are being monitored for possible violation of environmental ordinances.

There are 579 registered big scale manufacturing plants in Pasig City.

The environment-friendly companies cited by Cenro and Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio were Lunar Steel (steel manufacturing category); AB Foods and Beverages Phils. (food manufacturing category); The Alexandra Condominium (residential condominium); The New Medical City (hospital category); MGM Chemical Industry (small scale manufacturing); Jade Palace (restaurant category); K-Square Petroleum (gasoline station); White Marketing and Development (motel/lodge); Discovery Suites (hotel category); R&A Junkshop (junk shop category).

Special awards were also given to Aquino Dy (metal recycling); Asahi Glass (glass recycling); Kilus Foundation Multi-purpose Cooperative (doy-pack recycling); Tiendesitas (ecological destination) and IPM Development Corp.

On the other hand, Global Food Factory and G&S Packaging were cited for being the most improved companies.

3-day fiesta opens April 27 at CCP complex

By Tina G. Santos

ALIWAN FIESTA 2006, WHICH BRINGS together all the country's grandest festivals, from Baguio in the north to down south in Maguindanao, will feature street dancers, craftsmen and musicians—all decked out in colorful costumes—vying for the P1 million grand prize in the street dance and float competitions.

Organized by the Manila Broadcasting Company, in partnership with the cities of Manila and Pasay and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Aliwan grand fiesta will be held from April 27 to 29.

It will feature the most popular fiestas from all over the country such as the National Capital Region's Marikina Festival; the Cordillera Autonomous Region's Panagbenga Festival (Baguio City); Region I's Pamulinawen Festival (Laoag City); Region II's Sabutan Festival; Region III's Kasilonawan Obando Fertility Ritual (Bulacan); Region IV's Sumakah Festival (Antipolo); Region V's Himag-Ulaw (Placer, Masbate); Region VI's Dinagyang Festival (Iloilo City); Region VII's Sinulog Festival (Cebu City); Region VIII's Padul-Ong Festival (Borongan, Eastern Samar); Region IX's Pasalamat Festival (Pagadian City); and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's Padang-Padang Festival (Parang, Maguindanao).

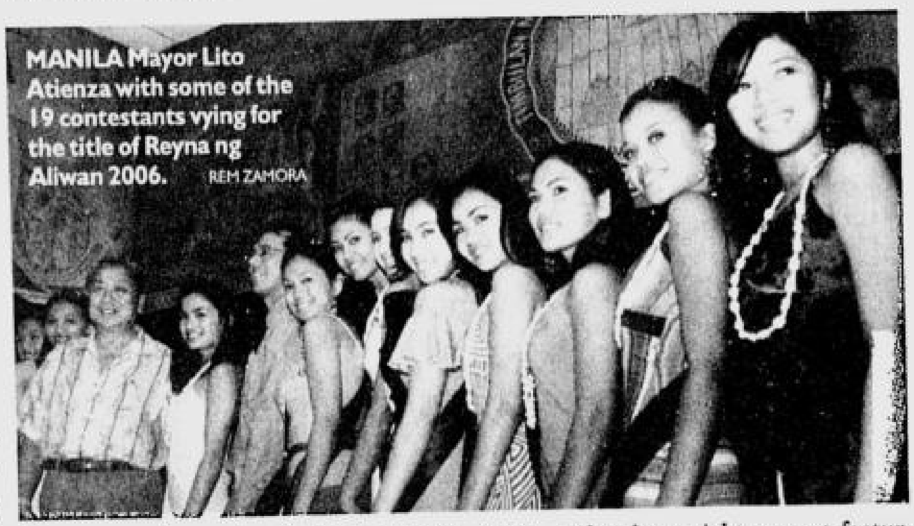
Over 4,500 participants will join the grand parade, set on April 29, the last day of the festival.

Closed to traffic

The southbound lane of Roxas Boulevard from Vito Cruz to Kalaw will be closed to traffic from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. for the parade which will feature floats and street dancers.

Another highlight of the festival is the Reyna ng Aliwan beauty pageant set on April 28, 6:30 p.m. at the CCP complex. The 19 contestants vying for the title paid a courtesy call on Manila Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday morning.

Other attractions of the three-day affair are a fireworks display, a trade bazaar showcasing the products and culinary delights of participating regions, and a three-night concert featuring top entertainers, bands and celebrities.



MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza with some of the 19 contestants vying for the title of Reyna ng Aliwan 2006. REM ZAMORA

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REQUIREMENTS

Orgs, clubs, societies or councils should submit five (5) copies of the following:
- An accomplished Entry Form
- A one-page certification attesting to the existence and veracity of the information submitted
  - for In-School Youth Organizations, a certification from the Office of Student Affairs
  - for Community-based, Out-of-School or Working Youth Organizations, a certification from the LGU/barangay or gov't agency
- A one-page short profile of the organization featuring a brief description, its nature and background, programs and track record
- A three-page profile of the Project Entry, featuring a brief but descriptive account or narrative that will illustrate the program/project.
- 3-page project documentation (photos, testimonies of partners or beneficiaries, certificates, etc.)

- Organizations shall be judged on the basis of a recent program or project that made an impact on the community and which best reflects the efforts of young people as partners in nation-building.
- A continuing project entry (or one that started in 2005) must either be completed, or a major portion must have been undertaken by the deadline.
- Registration in the NYC's Youth Organization Registration Program (YORP) is mandatory; registration papers may be submitted together with the project entry.
- Recipients of other awards are eligible.
- Previous TAYO winners and finalists may still participate, provided they submit a project entry different from the one submitted in the preceding search.
- All decisions of the TAYO Screening Committee and Panel of Judges are final.
- All materials submitted to the TAYO Secretariat automatically become property of the organizers.

SEARCH CRITERIA
- IMPACT of the Project Entry to the community (Improvement in literacy, sanitation, health, income, etc.)
- SOCIAL MOBILIZATION (Involvement of the community, especially the youth in planning, implementing and evaluating the program or project)
- INNOVATIVENESS (Introduction/application of new technologies, uniqueness of services or products, promotion of unique or indigenous ways or materials)
- SUSTAINABILITY AND PROBABILITY OF DUPLICATION

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c/o the National Youth Commission
4/F Bookman Building, 373 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City

Iran threatens to hide its nuclear program

TEHRAN—IRAN SAID TUESDAY it will halt relations with the UN atomic watchdog if sanctions are imposed because of its suspect nuclear drive and vowed a military attack would merely send its activities underground.

The Islamic regime's national security chief Ali Larijani also refused to rule out using oil as a weapon in the worsening international standoff, warning of "important consequences" for energy supplies if Iran was subjected to "radical measures." "If you decide to use sanctions against us, our relations with the agency will be suspended," Larijani said of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The IAEA has been investigating Iran for more than three years, and any cut in ties would spell an end to international inspections and monitoring of nuclear facilities inside the Islamic republic.

The warning, made at a conference on nuclear energy in Tehran, came ahead of Friday's deadline set by the UN Security Council for Iran to freeze ultra-sensitive uranium enrichment work.

Iran says it only wants to enrich to make reactor fuel for power plants, but the process can be extended to make weapons.

The country's refusal to comply with the Security Council demand—as well as its promise to expand enrichment work to reach an industrial-scale capacity—leaves it exposed to the danger of UN sanctions.

The United States has also not ruled out military action.

"Military action against Iran will not lead to the closure of the programme," Larijani said. "If you take harsh measures, we will hide this programme. Then you cannot solve the nuclear issue.

"You may inflict a loss on us but you will lose also," he warned.

Iran is the world's fourth largest crude producer and the second-biggest in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec). Tensions over the country's nuclear drive have already helped push crude prices to record highs.

"Iran will not start a crisis," Larijani told reporters when asked if the country would use its vast oil reserves as a weapon in the dispute.

"But if we are subjected to radical measures, that will automatically have important consequences for oil," he added.

Larijani's barrage of threats came the day after hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also warned that Iran could quit the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but nonetheless confidently dismissed any threat of sanctions or even a US attack.

At the United Nations in New York, US ambassador John Bolton said the Security Council was to consider a draft resolution that would legally require Iran to comply with demands that it freeze all uranium enrichment activities.

"Our expectation would be that assuming no change of direction by Iran and there's no reason to think there will be a change of direction, we'll look at a 'Chapter 7' resolution to make mandatory all the existing IAEA resolutions," he said.

Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which is invoked in case of threats to international peace and security, can open the door to sanctions or even military action.

Iran's war of words with Israel also worsened, with the Jewish state's former premier Shimon Peres comparing Ahmadinejad to Adolf Hitler.

"This is the first man since Hitler to stand up and say that the Jewish people must be exterminated," the Nobel peace prize winner said as the Jewish state observed a day of remembrance for victims of the Nazi genocide.

Ahmadinejad, who has dismissed the Holocaust as a "myth", had on Monday asserted that the "fake" Jewish state "cannot survive" and called on immigrants to the country to go back to where they came from.

China meanwhile insisted the nuclear issue could still be resolved through negotiations, and called on all sides to show flexibility. *AFP*

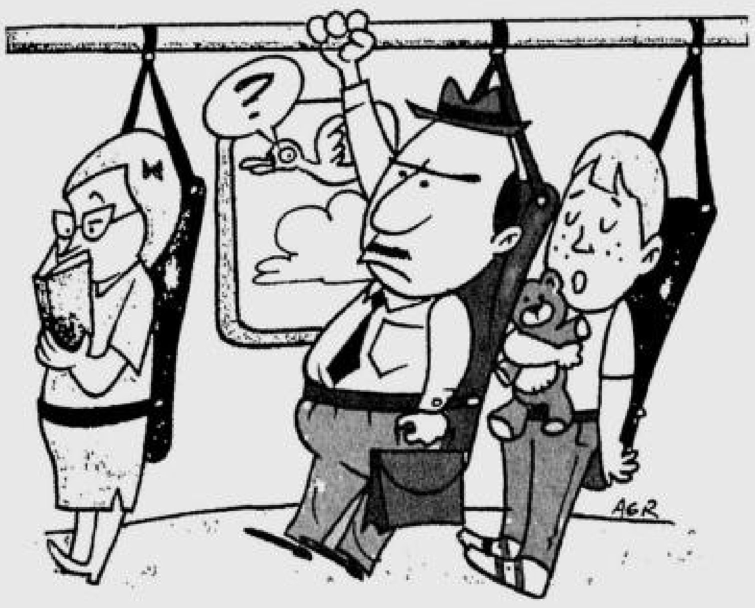


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

The economy fare of the future: SRO seats only

THE AIRLINES HAVE COME UP with a new answer to an old question: How many passengers can be squeezed into economy class?

A lot more, it turns out, especially if an idea still in the early stage should catch on: standing-room-only "seats."

Airbus has been quietly pitching the standing-room-only option to Asian carriers, though none has agreed to it yet. Passengers in the standing section would be propped against a padded backboard, held in place with a harness, according to experts who have seen a proposal.

But even short of that option, carriers have been slipping another row or two of seats into coach by exploiting stronger, lighter materials developed by seat manufacturers that allow for slimmer seatbacks. The thinner seats theoretically could be used to give passengers more legroom but, in practice, the airlines have been keeping the amount of space between rows the same to accommodate additional rows. The result is an additional six seats on a typical Boeing 737 for a total of 156, and as many as 12 new seats on a Boeing 757 for a total of 200.

That such things are even being considered is a result of several factors. High fuel costs, for example, are making it difficult for carriers to turn a profit. The new seat technology alone, when used to add more places for passengers, can add millions in additional annual revenue. The new designs also reduce a seat's weight by up to 15 pounds, helping to hold down fuel consumption. A typical seat in economy class now weighs 74 to 82 pounds.

Even as the airlines are trimming the size of the seatbacks in coach, they are installing seats as thick and heavy as ever in first and business class—and going to great lengths to promote them. That is because each passenger in such a seat can generate several times the revenue of a coach traveler.

At the front of the cabin, the emphasis is on comfort and amenities like sophisticated entertainment systems. Some of the new seats even feature in-seat electronic massagers. And, of course, the airlines have installed lie-flat seats for their premium passengers on international routes. *New York Times News Service*

BULLDOG BEAUTY
Hannah sits on the throne after being crowned the winner of the 27th annual Drake Most Beautiful Bulldog Contest, April 24, in Des Moines, Iowa. AP

US seeks death for Moussaoui

ALEXANDRIA, VA.—A US JURY began deliberating Zacarias Moussaoui's fate on Monday after prosecutors requested the death penalty for the Sept. 11 conspirator and the defense implored jurors to send him to prison for life so he would not become a martyr.

The jury did not reach a verdict after three hours of deliberations and were to return on Tuesday.

The only US case related to the deadly hijacked airliner attacks went to the jury after District Judge Leonie Brinkema gave them roughly an hour of instructions.

In closing arguments, Assistant US Attorney David Raskin asked the jury to decide to execute Moussaoui, who said he would have participated in the Sept. 11 attacks if he had not been arrested the previous month on immigration charges.

"Let me be blunt, ladies and gentlemen," said Raskin.

"There is no place on this good Earth for Zacarias Moussaoui." But one of the court-appointed defense lawyers, Gerald Zerkin, urged the jury to instead make a decision that "requires some courage" and sentence Moussaoui to life in prison.

"He wants you to sentence him to death. He came to America to die in jihad and you are his last chance," Zerkin said. "He clearly sees that as his last way to martyrdom." The jury will just decide the sentence since Moussaoui has pleaded guilty to six conspiracy counts relating the Sept. 11 plot.

Moussaoui, 37, sat in the courtroom staring at the 12-member jury during most of closing proceedings. But as he left for a morning break, Moussaoui said, "You'll never get me, America. Never ever." After the jury left to begin deliberating, Brinkema lauded the attorneys and noted that the defense lawyers—with whom Moussaoui will not speak—had an "impossible client." "There never has been a defendant as difficult as this one," said Brinkema.

Prosecutors earlier dismissed defense claims that Moussaoui was mentally ill and that he sought martyrdom.

Raskin said Moussaoui was "elated that al-Qaida murdered 2,972 innocent people on Sept. 11." "Enough is enough," Raskin said. "It is time to put an end to his hatred and venom. It is time to sentence Zacarias Moussaoui to death." The panel of nine men and three women must be unanimous in order to sentence Moussaoui to death. The same jury already decided Moussaoui was eligible for the death penalty.

Zerkin said the US government was offering up Moussaoui as a "sacrificial lamb." "The government opts for retribution against the only person it has brought to trial in relation to 9/11," the lawyer said in describing Moussaoui as an inept al-Qaida operative. *Reuters*

Abbas tells Hamas: I can dissolve gov't if I want to

ABBAS AP

ANKARA—PALESTINIAN PRESIdent Mahmoud Abbas sent a sharp reminder to Hamas on Monday he had the power to dissolve the new government, but said he did not want to do so and would give the group more time to embrace peacemaking.

"Hamas has to change some of its political attitudes. Let's wait a while and see if it will change," Abbas told Turkish CNN.

Shunned by the United States and the European Union for refusing to renounce violence and accept the pursuit of peace with Israel, the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority has been struggling for nearly a month to secure funds to pay overdue salaries to 165,000 government workers.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, speaking in Gaza, said funds collected by the Arab League in Cairo now totaled "maybe" $90 million and that discussions were under way to bring that money quickly into the Authority.

Fearing US sanctions, many banks are refusing to handle any of the government's funds, and it remains to be seen whether any of the promised aid will make it through.

"Hamas is still acting as if it were in opposition, not in government. It has to face realities, it has to be in contact with Israel to meet the daily needs of the Palestinian people," Abbas said in remarks translated from English into Turkish.

"The constitution gives me the right to dismiss the government but I do not want to use this power," said Abbas, visiting Turkey at the start of a European fundraising tour.

Mohammad Nazal, a Hamas politburo member, said Abbas wanted the Palestinian government to fail.

"This is an attempt to blackmail Hamas to change its political position. Instead of calming media attacks, he is bizarrely talking about failure of a government that barely took office," Nazal, who lives in exile in Damascus, told Reuters.

Abbas, leader of the more moderate faction Fatah, last week vetoed Hamas's nomination of a Gaza Strip militant to a senior security post, prompting violent street confrontations and heightening fears of a possible Palestinian civil war.

A top aide said Abbas was seeking funds from the European Union to expand his own presidential guard by up to 40 percent.

The expansion would be part of a broader aid package, estimated by some Western diplomats at nearly $55 million, aimed at keeping Abbas's office running and shoring up the institutions he still oversees, from border security to Palestinian television.

Haniyeh urged members of his Hamas movement and Abbas's Fatah to show restraint following two days of clashes that wounded about 30 people.

"I appeal to all our people to return to calm and order," Haniyeh said after visiting the Health Ministry building in Gaza where Hamas and Fatah gunmen clashed on Sunday.

Sporadic protests have broken out over unpaid March salaries, but some officials said it could get much worse. *Reuters*

5 killed in Afghan plane crash

LASHKAR GAH, AFGHANISTAN—A PLANE carrying US drug enforcement officials slammed into tents and mud-brick houses after dodging a truck on a runway, killing two Ukrainian crew members on board and three people on the ground, officials said Tuesday.

At least 13 people were injured, including several Americans, when the Russian-made, twin-engine An-32 aircraft plowed into a nomad settlement while landing at an airport in Lashkar Gah in southern Afghanistan. The plane had to maneuver to avoid a truck that crossed the runway, officials said.

Two of the four Ukrainian crew members, including the pilot, were killed, US Embassy spokesperson Lou Fintor said, while eight of the 13 passengers—11 Americans and two people whose nationalities were not specified—suffered minor injuries.

Canadian military spokesperson Maj. Quentin Innis said three Afghans on the ground were also killed and five people unaccounted for.

Two of the Afghans were nomad girls, aged 2 and 3, who were crushed to death in their mud brick homes as they slept, their mothers said. At least five other people were injured.

"We were sitting eating our lunch when I heard a loud noise, and then turned to see a big plane sliding along the ground from the airstrip before it smashed into our homes," said Lal Bibi, 40, whose 2-year-old daughter, Palwasha, was killed.

The casualty count could have been higher if the settlement's men had not left earlier to work at a farm picking opium poppies, Bibi said.

The plane was leased by the State Department and carried a team from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Innis said. The bureau has been helping Afghan authorities conduct opium eradication campaigns across southern Afghanistan. *AP*

A US soldier (left) and Afghan policemen inspect the site where a plane crashed while landing in Lashkargah, southern Afghanistan, April 24. AFP

Thousands gather in Poland to remember Holocaust victims

KRAKOW, POLAND—THOUSANDS OF mostly young people gathered in southern Poland Tuesday for an annual march through the killing fields of the Nazi German Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp to remember victims of the Holocaust.

Among those taking part in the three-kilometer March of the Living—from the red-brick barracks of Auschwitz to the infamous, purpose-built gas chambers in Birkenau where at least 1.1 million people perished as Nazi Germany tried to wipe out Europe's Jews—were around 5,000 Israelis, a member of a delegation from Israel's education ministry told AFP.

"The Holocaust is part of our history, which cannot be erased and should not be forgotten. We are here to see how to take the March of the Living into the future and ensure that the message it carries continues," one of the Israeli officials, who asked not to be named for security reasons, said in Krakow on the eve of the event.

She raised the fear that, as survivors of Auschwitz-Birkenau, many of whom are now in their 80s, die off, the stark message carried in the now silent ruins of the camp might lose some of its impact.

"It is a real fear of mine, something that worries me," she said.

Among those attending the annual tribute to the Holocaust's estimated six million victims was former Israel prime minister Shimon Peres, a winner of the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize and number two in Israeli prime minister-designate Ehud Olmert's Kadima party.

The march wends its way from the haunting "Arbeit macht Frei" (Work Brings Freedom) sign at the entrance of the Auschwitz camp, along the streets of the southern Polish town of Oswiecim, to the rubble of two of Birkenau's gas chambers. The idea of staging the march germinated some 20 years ago, to try to dim the voices of negationists who deny the Holocaust ever happened.

Originally open only to Jews, people of all faiths were invited to take part in the march in the 1990s. *AFP*

Egypt resort suicide attacks kill 23

DAHAB, EGYPT—THREE nearly simultaneous bombings hit this Egyptian beach resort popular with foreigners, killing at least 23 people on streets filled with vacationers and Egyptians enjoying a long weekend marking a national holiday.

The early evening bombings in the Sinai seaside city of Dahab blew out storefronts along a crowded promenade of shops, restaurants and bars. Hours after the bombings, shards of glass lay in piles along with white tiles stained with bloody footprints. One bomb exploded outside a jewelry store called Mona Lisa, knocking out letters from the sign.

Interior Minister Habib el-Adly said those killed included 20 Egyptians and three foreigners. Sixty-two people were wounded.

The explosions came a day after Osama bin Laden issued a call to arms to Muslims to support al-Qaida in fighting what he calls a war against Islam.

The bombings—the third terror strike on a Sinai resort in less than two years—hit Dahab at 7:15 p.m. when the streets were jammed with tourists strolling, shopping or looking for a restaurant or bar for evening festivities by the tranquil waters of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Hotels and guesthouses were filled with foreigners and with Egyptians celebrating the long Coptic Christian Easter weekend that coincided this year with Shem al-Nessim, the ancient holiday marking the first day of spring.

The attacks came a day before Sinai Liberation Day, a national holiday marking the return of the peninsula to Egypt from Israel as a result of the 1979 peace treaty.

For years, Dahab was a popular, low-key haven for young Western and Israeli backpackers drawn by prime scuba diving and cheap hotels, which mainly consisted of huts set up along the beach. In recent years, a number of more upscale hotels have been built, including a five-star Hilton resort.

At least three Israelis were hurt in the attack, which sent a steady stream of cars back to Israel some 100 km to the north. Israeli authorities said 1,800 of their citizens were in the Sinai at the time of the blasts. However, there were far fewer Israelis vacationing in Sinai than during last week's Passover holiday.

Israel's ambassador in Cairo, Shalom Cohen, said the Israeli government had warned repeatedly against visiting the Sinai.

"Unfortunately, the warnings came true," he told Israel's Channel 10 TV.

President Hosni Mubarak, whose economy is heavily dependent on tourism, called the blasts a "sinful terrorist action."

President George W. Bush also condemned the attacks.

"Today we saw again that the terrorists are willing to try to define the world the way they want to see it," Bush said in Las Vegas.

The Interior Ministry said the wounded included 42 Egyptians and 17 foreigners—including three Americans—while police put the number of wounded at more than 150. The discrepancy could not be immediately be explained.

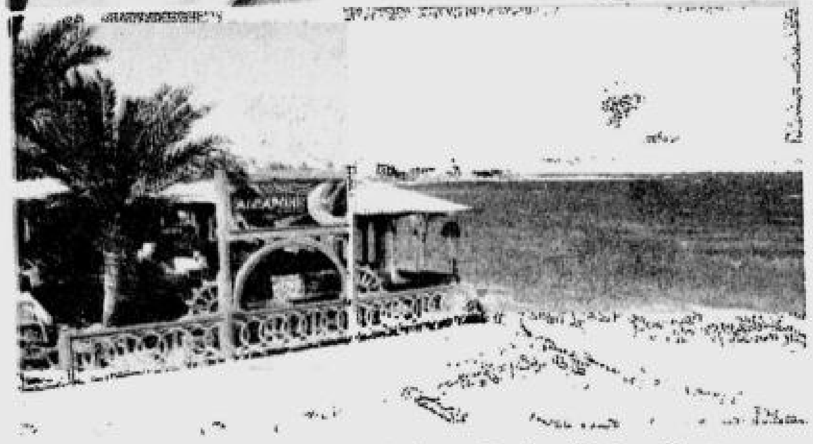
Police said one Russian and one Swiss were among the dead; el-Adly would not confirm those nationalities.

Terrorist attacks have killed nearly 100 people at several tourist resorts in the Sinai Peninsula in the past two years.

Bombings in the resorts of Taba and Ras Shitan, near the Israeli border, killed 34 people in October 2004. Suicide attackers in July in the resort of Sharm el-Sheik killed at least 64 people, mainly tourists.

The Egyptian government has said the militants who carried out the bombings were locals without international connections, but other security agencies have said they suspect al-Qaida.

In Washington, a US counterterrorism official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in compliance with office policy, said it was unclear who was behind Monday's attack. *AP*

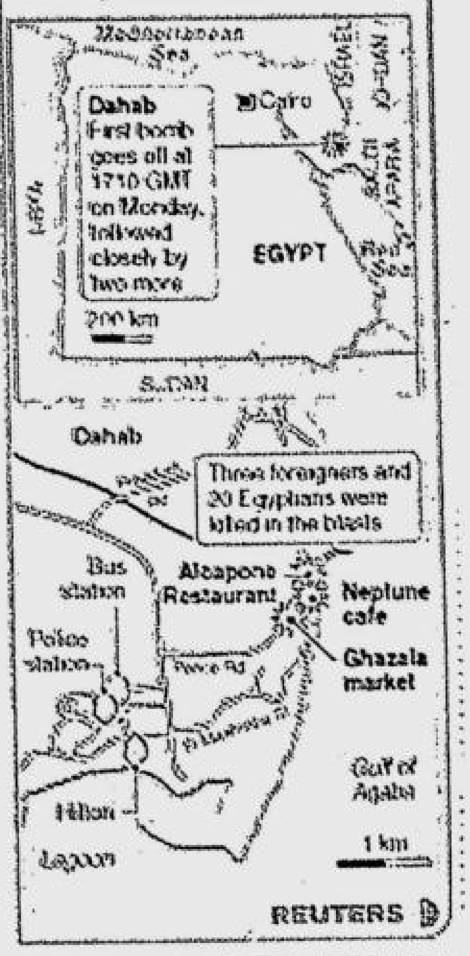


EGYPTIAN police survey the scene April 25 at the site of one of three explosions which took place last night in Egypt's Red Sea tourist resort of Dahab. Suicide bombers killed 23 people including foreigners and wounded scores more when they blew themselves up during a peak holiday season, officials said today. AFP

PHOTO at left shows the Al Capone Restaurant a day before suicide bombers blew themselves up, tearing the place part. AP

EGYPT BOMBS

Three explosions that killed at least 23 people and injured at least 60 in the Sinai resort of Dahab were probably from time bombs planted on the ground, security officers said on Tuesday



Resort town turned into war zone

DAHAB, EGYPT—"IT WAS LIKE WAR. I'd never seen anything like it before, a child, a baby, blood everywhere," said German doctor Michael Hartlich, shaking at the memory, tears in his eyes. "A boy died in my arms."

As the sun rose Tuesday over the Red Sea, the appalling destruction of three deadly explosions remained littered through the Egyptian holiday resort of Dahab.

Flies hovered over patches of blood caked with mud. The lingering acrid smell of burnt flesh laced the sea breeze.

Tearful and stoical, holidaymakers and resort workers recounted the chaos that decimated their idyll on Monday's traditional spring holiday and the eve of Sinai Liberation Day commemorating the end of Israeli occupation in 1982.

"Sirens went off. People were running around. Police on the streets. Firemen. It was like organized chaos. People picking up bits of people. It was crazy," said 42-year-old diving instructor Paul McBeath from Scotland.

He has lived and taught in Dahab for four years. One of his colleagues at the Red Sea Relax school was blown from the shopfront to the seafront by the force of one of the almost simultaneous explosions.

At a restaurant named after notorious gangster Al Capone that was gutted by the same blast, uneaten plates of congealed chips remained on tables, half-finished fruit cocktails in glasses. *AFP*

World leaders condemn triple bomb attacks

LAS VEGAS—WORLD LEADERS UNITed to roundly condemn Monday's deadly triple bomb attack in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Dahab, with US President George W. Bush branding it a "heinous act."

"Today we saw again that the terrorists are willing to try to define the world the way they want to see it," Bush said. "I strongly condemn the killings that took place, the innocent lives lost in Egypt," he said.

"I assure the enemy this: we will stay on the offense, we will not waiver, we will not tire, we will bring them to justice for the sake of justice and humanity," Bush said at a fundraiser for a congressional candidate in Las Vegas.

His Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Washington has been in contact with the Egyptian government "to extend our condolences and to offer whatever assistance they may need". "We will support our Egyptian friends in their commitment to fight terror and to bring to justice those responsible for this crime," Rice said in a statement.

At least three foreigners—a Swiss, a Russian and a German baby—were among 23 people killed in the third deadly bombings in resorts in the Sinai peninsula in just 18 months.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak vowed that "the perpetrators of these heinous acts of terrorism will be tracked down and punished."

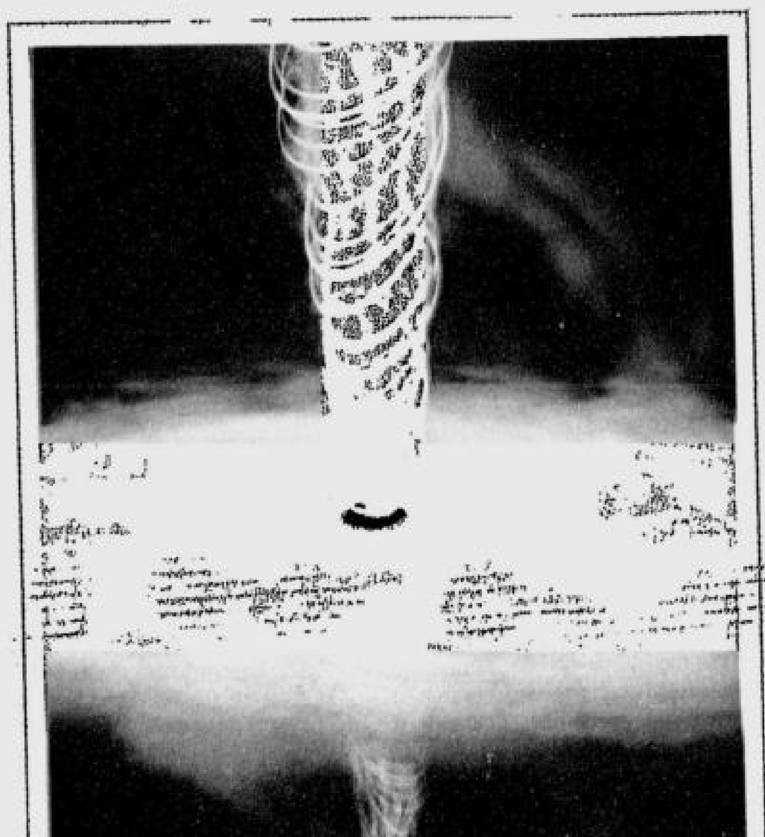
No one immediately claimed credit for the blasts in a market and busy restaurant area, which came one day after a new audiotape of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden surfaced accusing the "crusaders" of the West of waging war against Islam.

In July last year, about 70 people were killed in multiple attacks on Sharm el-Sheikh at the tip of the Sinai and at least 34 lost their lives in bombings in Taba near the border with Israel in October 2004.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw described the bombings as "appalling", targeting as they did a popular holiday resort on an Egyptian public holiday.

"Once again terrorists have demonstrated their callous disregard for human life," he said.

His Canadian counterpart Peter MacKay said in statement, "Canada strongly condemns this terrorist act, and we are profoundly troubled by such events." "Although the details are still unfolding, this is clearly an act directed against innocent civilians," he added. "The perpetrators must be found and brought to justice." MacKay said, "Canadians are deeply saddened by the loss of life caused" the blasts. "We offer our heartfelt condolences to Egypt and to all other countries affected by this tragedy. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families." *AFP*



EFFICIENT ENGINE
This illustration shows an artist's impression of a black hole engine. Black holes are the most fuel-efficient engines in the universe, researchers said. If a car could use this kind of engine, it could theoretically go about 1.6 billion km on 4.5 liters of gas, said Steve Allen of Stanford University in California. REUTERS

7 car bomb explosions rock Baghdad

BAGHDAD—THE BODIES OF 32 security force recruits were found in Baghdad on Monday and a wave of car bombs hit the city while Iraq's prime minister-designate vowed to unite all ethnic and sectarian groups.

Jawad al-Maliki is working on choosing a cabinet, which will share power among Shi'ite Muslims, Sunni Arabs and Kurds in a bid to end a Sunni insurgency and sectarian violence.

Maliki told CNN television healing the divisions wracking postwar Iraq was his biggest job as its first permanent premier.

"The main challenge that I see is the existence of a torn relationship in the Iraqi community with all the sectarian and ethnic backgrounds," said the tough-talking Shi'ite politician.

"So I have to work first on uniting all of these elements together and work on a national reconciliation on the basis of national dialogue and common interests."

The 32 bodies were found in two places, Interior Ministry sources said. All the victims were from the rebel stronghold of Ramadi, 110 km west of the capital.

Two car bombs near Baghdad's Mustansiriya University killed at least five people and wounded 25, officials said. A car bomb near the Health Ministry killed three people and wounded 25.

Four other bombings in the city wounded at least 27 people.

Guerrillas attacked a police station near Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit, killing four policemen. Rebels draw support from the Sunni minority once dominant under Saddam.

Maliki has four weeks to choose a new cabinet and form a government of national unity, widely seen as the only way to halt the sectarian violence.

The cabinet and Maliki's own appointment, made by President Jalal Talabani on Saturday, must be ratified by parliament.

A key test of his ability to lead and to unite will be his choice of interior minister, perhaps the most sensitive post given the brutal past many Iraqis endured under Saddam's rule and a present racked by relentless instability and violence.

"We want nothing but security and a safe community in which we can live and raise our children safely," said Wael Khamis, a 44-year-old businessman.

"All we have now is a hope and a dream of a better life. The coming government is our last chance. My wish is to take my family on a car ride without fear." With Maliki in the process of forming a coalition and ending four months of political paralysis, Shiite neighbor Iran said there was no longer any need for talks with the United States to discuss Iraq's problems.

"By God's will we think that right now, because of the presence of a permanent government of Iraq, there is no need," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told reporters in Tehran.

During the impasse among Iraqi leaders over the shape of a new government that followed December elections, Iran and the United States had agreed to discuss how to stabilize Iraq.

But while the political deadlock appears to be over, the bloodshed goes on.

Yarub Yassin, 22, was due have married this week but was one of seven people killed in a rocket attack in Baghdad on Sunday.

He was buried on Monday with his body wrapped in the thin mattress and covers he had bought for his wedding night. The horns and drums that were to have celebrated his wedding sounded as mourners wailed.

In Baghdad's heavily fortified so-called Green Zone, the court trying Saddam for crimes against humanity heard that signatures of the former leader and six co-accused on documents linking them to the killing of 148 Shiites in the 1980s were genuine.

The prosecution had demanded the court commission a team of criminal experts to authenticate signatures and handwriting of the defendants.

Saddam and his half brother Barzan al-Tikriti have refused to give samples of their writing but both have said there was no crime in prosecuting the 148 from the village of Dujail because they were accused of trying to kill the former Iraqi president.

The defendants could face death by hanging if found guilty. The trial was adjourned until May 15 to give the defense time to present their witnesses in the next session.

Saddam sat in a dark suit and white shirt in his metal pen, unusually quiet for a man who has dominated the court with tirades calling for Iraqis to revolt against US occupation. *Reuters*

Tyros abound in Petron volley /A28

SPORTS

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: Inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Painters gain tie for lead

Outshine Jewels in overtime as Sta. Maria comes to the fore

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Olivarez Center*)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Harbour Centre
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Rain or Shine

By Jasmine W. Payo

ERWIN STA. MARIA SIZZLED OFF THE bench to lift Rain or Shine over Montaña Pawnshop, 94-86, in overtime yesterday in the PBL Unity Cup at the San Andres Gym.

Sta. Maria pumped in a personal conference-high 22 points built on a 6-of-8 shooting from the three-point area as the Elasto Painters forged a three-way tie for the lead at 6-2 with the Jewelers and the idle Toyota Otis Sparks.

Marvin Ortiguerra also shone for Rain or Shine, knocking in the game-tying triple with 2.2 seconds left in regulation, en route to a 21-point effort.

Earlier, Kelly Williams hardly looked in-

PAINTERS/ A28

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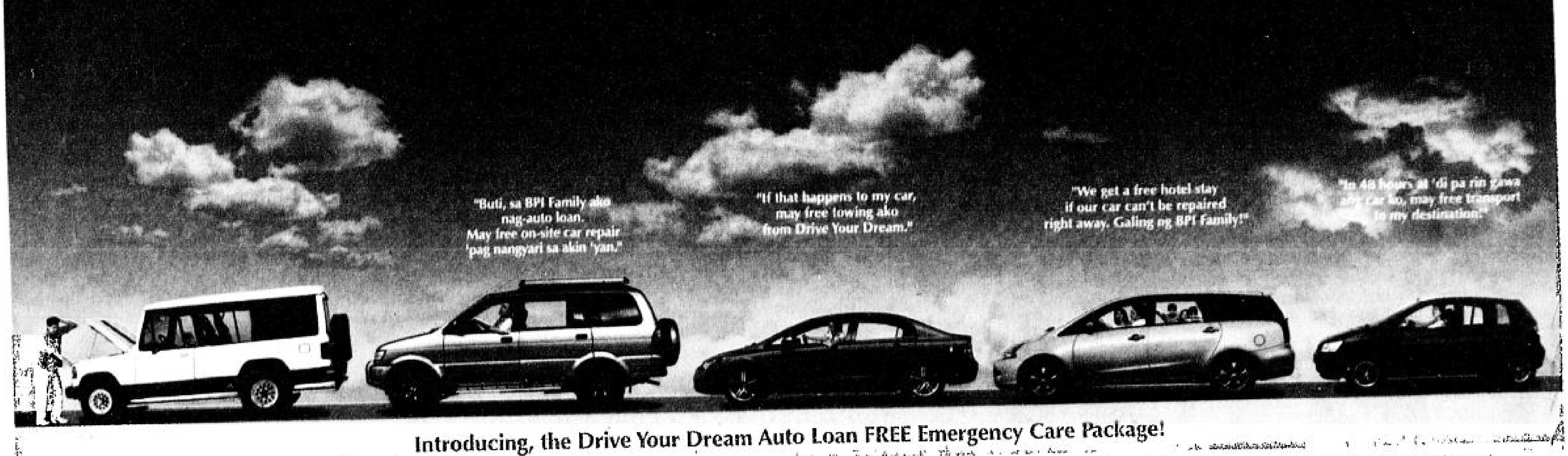
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SUSPENSION AFTERMATH

La Salle mulling 2 options

By Jasmine W. Payo

SLAPPED WITH A ONE-YEAR SUSPENSION from all UAAP sports due to an eligibility controversy, De La Salle University is now contemplating on two opposing moves.

"There are two extremes: One is acceptance of the decision and the other is legal action," said Lito Tanjuatco, a member of La Salle's boards of trustees and regents, before yesterday's meeting presided over by president Bro. Armin Luistro, FSC.

"The only advice I'm giving right now to the university is that we must formulate what has to be done. We need legal inputs because it's very complicated."

Tanjuatco said the university hasn't ruled out either of the two options. He had hinted last year that the university may take the case to the court, while some alumni groups have reportedly requested the school to simply accept the decision.

"I'm not being evasive, but right now I don't know (what the decision will be)," said Tanjuatco. "There are many matters to consider. But what we'll be guided upon is to preserve the integrity of DLSU."

La Salle's marketing communication office head Malou Caluma said the school will issue a statement as soon as officials reach a decision.

The UAAP had unanimously voted Friday to suspend La Salle for one year, saying that it was through the school's negligence that Mark Benitez and Tim Gatchalian gained entry into the Archers team that won the 2004 varsity championship.

Benitez and Gatchalian had submitted fake certificates of their Philippine Educational Placement Test, an exam taken in lieu of a high school diploma.

Tagaytay five scuttles Valencia

VALENCIA CITY—Batang Tagaytay won its first road game Monday night as it smothered host Valencia Golden Harvest, 79-69, in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the city gym here.

Over the CP Tinga gym in Taguig, Forward Taguig of Mayor Freddie Tinga outsteadied the Iloilo Warriors, 95-92.

With their third victories in four games, the Tagaytay hoopsters of NBC executive vice president and Mayor Bambol Tolentino and Taguig shared the northern division lead in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Molten and Prime Channel.

STANDINGS	W	L
Northern Division		
Batang Tagaytay	3	1
Forward Taguig	3	1
Bacchus/Harbour	3	2
Spring-Parañaque	2	2
Pangasinan	1	3
Laguna-Sta. Rosa	0	3
Southern Division		
Ozamiz Cotta	3	0
Iligan Crusaders	4	3
North Cotabato	4	3
Valencia	2	2
Pagadian	2	2
Iloilo Warriors	1	3

The scores:

TAGAYTAY 79—Marquez 26, Robillos 14, Mallari 10, Genido 9, Reyes 8, Gulyab 4, Finullar 2, Jorge 2, Mendoza 2, Pellejera 0.

VALENCIA 69—Cruz 20, Cabili 10, Braga 10, Cummings 9, Berami 9, Adams 4, Navales 4, Celiz 2, Taligatos 0, Dumapig 0, Cesar 0.

Quarters: 29-15, 49-32, 62-60, 79-69

TAGUIG 95—Gragasin 29, Legaspi 21, Uy 11, Abad 9, Constantino 6, Reguerra 6, Castro 4, Dela Rosa 3, Lapanid 2, Lozano 2, Magsambol 2, Dulay 0.

ILOILO 82—Senierez 19, Sinco 16, Poral 12, Sinaon 11, Antenor-Cruz 7, Leonida 7, Baulista 4, Sencil 4, Unarce 2.

Quarters: 25-24, 44-49, 67-63, 95-82

Painters edge Jewels, gain share of lead

From page A27

jured as he poured in 22 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Magnolia Ice Cream past Harbour Centre, 74-65.

Williams, who's still nursing an ankle injury, joined hands with Mark Isip and Arwind Santos in the second half as the Spinners improved their mark to 4-4.

"It was almost a won game for Montaña, but our experience showed, especially Ortiguerra. And if it wasn't for Sta. Maria, we would not have won this game," said Rain or Shine coach Leo Austria.

The Painters zoomed past the Jewels with an 11-2 spurt, capped by back-to-back triples from Sta. Maria and Jojo Tangkay, to take an 88-79 advantage in the extra period.

Trailing by as many as 14 points in the second quarter, 16-30, the Painters leaned on Sta. Maria and Ortiguerra to mount a comeback in the second half.

"I hope we can sustain our strong start in the second round," said coach Koy Banal. "We had three good wins in the first round, but we couldn't sustain it. We're just waiting for back-to-back wins."

Only Joseph Yeo, who shot 12 points, finished in double figures for the Portmasters, who slipped to 2-6.

The Spinners orchestrated a 10-0 spurt to take a 57-47 lead early in the fourth period after a 47-47 deadlock in the closing minutes of the third quarter.

The Portmasters rallied but couldn't get any closer than five points, 67-62.

The scores:

First Game

MAGNOLIA 74—Williams 22, Isip 15, Santos 10, Misolas 7, Chan 6, Valenzuela 4, Jones 4, Rizada 3, Te 3, Co 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 65—Yeo 12, Gaco 9, Reyes 9, Arana 7, Tenorio 6, Chia 5, Alonzo 4, Maierhofer 4, Gamboa 4, Lanete 3, Coching 2, Luanzon 0, Paterno 0.

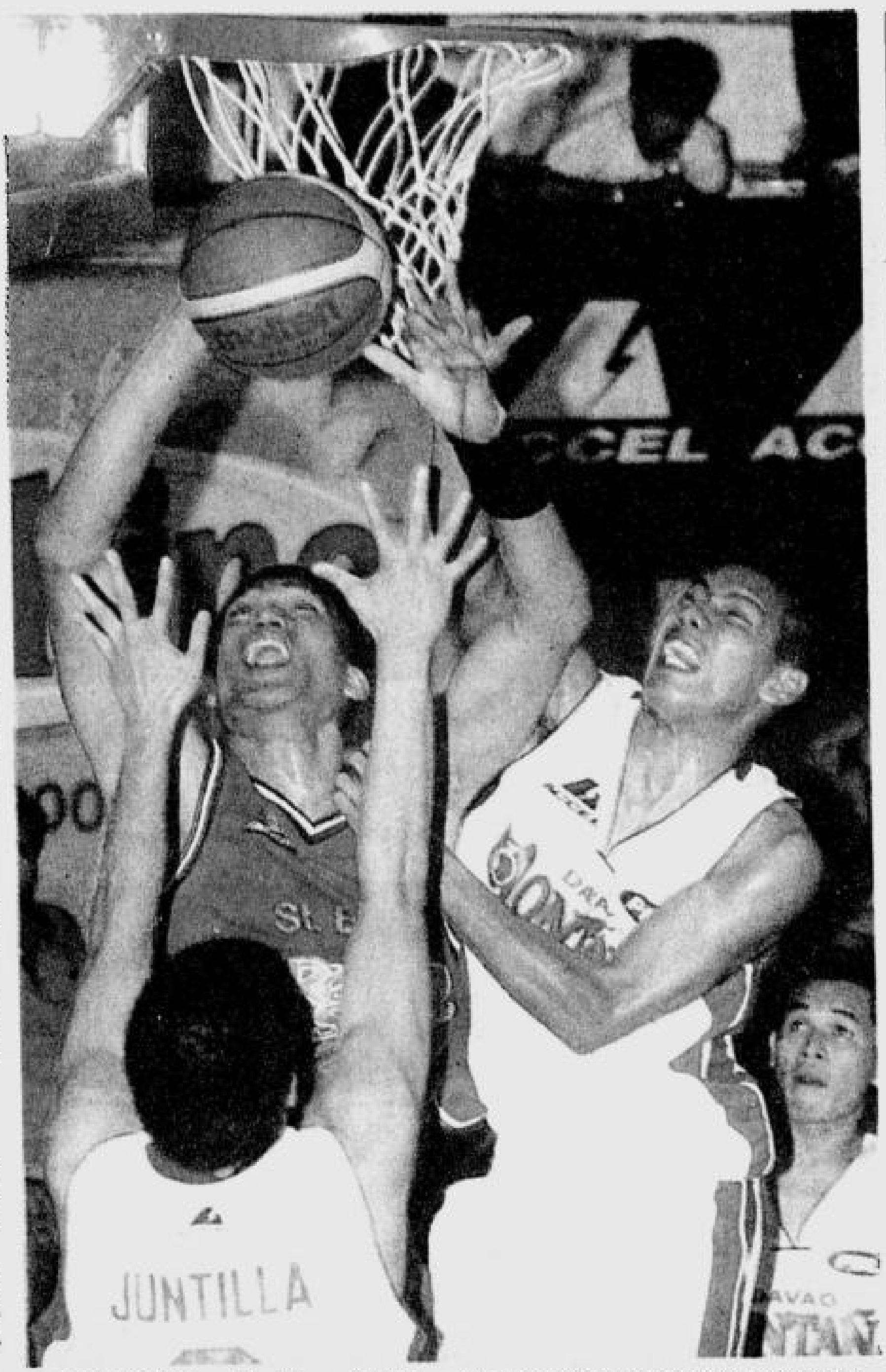
Quarters: 22-21, 37-31, 51-47, 74-65

Second Game

RAIN OR SHINE 94—Sta. Maria 22, Ortiguerra 21, Tangkay 20, Reyes 12, Eman 12, Malabanan 5, Enrile 2, Tan 0, Cabatu 0, Sagad 0, Orbeta 0.

MONTAÑA 86—Magpayo 19, Baguion 14, Bono 11, Juntilla 9, Dela Cuesta 8, Compton 8, Rodriguez 8, Guerrero 3, Espiritu 2, Vergara 0, Bonus 0.

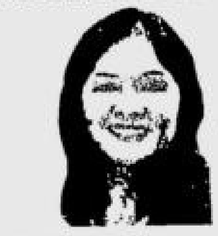
Quarters: 11-25, 36-47, 56-61, 77-77, 94-87 (OT)



MONTAÑA'S Larry Rodriguez (right) and Reed Juntilla make life difficult for Rain or Shine's Samigue Eman under the basket. RYAN LIM

Ex-PBA cager Demegillo's 'Wish Ko Lang'

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

CERTAIN QUARTERS were alarmed when they learned that GMA-7 was going to produce a special tribute in honor of former PBA cager Hernani Demegillo.

Not that Nani wasn't deserving of such an honor. It's just that there are many others more deserving.

Thus, the initial reaction was, "Why the tribute, has he passed away?" Or, "Does Nani have a serious ailment?"

Surely there must be a pressing or important reason for the tribute, everybody seemed to think.

* * *

Of course, the answer to both queries is no.

Nani is very much alive. In fact, it was he who had expressed a wish to have a reunion with his former PBA teammates in the program "Wish Ko Lang," which the producers granted.

"Nani was lucky to be chosen because as such, he stands to receive something like P100,000 in gifts," said player agent Danny Espiritu who was contacted by the television network to seek his assistance in inviting Nani's former teammates.

Nani played for Purefoods, Alaska, Presto, and Sta. Lucia in the PBA, alongside stars like Abe King, Jun Limpot, Alvin Patrimonio, Jerry Codiñera, Johnny Abarrientos, Jojo Lastimosa, Allan Caidic and Jeffrey Cariaso.

According to the letter-invitation being handed out by Danny, this special edition of "Wish Ko Lang," will be aired at 12 noon today on GMA-7.

* * *

There's something I can't figure out about Romi Garduce's Mount Everest expedition.

Who will take the video footage of his climb for the television coverage?

I know a TV crew from GMA-7 has been flown to Kathmandu, Nepal, to monitor Garduce's progress. But since none of them has been trained in mountain climbing, they can only make it up to a certain height.

The higher one goes, the thinner the air gets. A recent footage showed some members of the crew breathing heavily on their way to the first base camp. And that's only the first of several camps. How far can they go?

* * *

To get some answers, I called my friend and fellow columnist Ronnie Nathanielsz, who also happens to be a veteran broadcaster.

Ronnie said he could only think of one way a video footage of Garduce's climb could be taken.

He said Garduce himself, or one of his sherpas (mountain guides), will have to be equipped with a small camera. A satellite disc will also have to be installed within the vicinity so the video could be beamed to the Philippines.

Of course, it will be easier for the sherpas to take the video, instead of Garduce having to take footage of himself. But, according to Ronnie, it can be done.

We also agreed that under the circumstances, it will be more logical to train the sherpas on the use of the camera instead of training the cameramen on mountain climbing.

So far, I have not seen an actual footage of Garduce climbing, only Jiggy Manicad and his crew, who are facing extreme danger trying to scale even the lower limits of Mt. Everest.

Ronnie said these guys should be admired for their courage.

"It's no joke trekking even the base of that peak. It is very difficult," said Ronnie, who went through the same experience decades ago when he was much, much younger.

It is a wonder the crew got through 10,000 feet with none of them collapsing, he added.

Summer love in golden Baras

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HE WAS INVITED AND HE GOT THE cute ID pin to the boxing show. But Councilor Carlos Castañeda of Manila failed to attend the well-hyped Rumble by the Bay boxing presentation at the Rajah Sulaiman Park in Ermita, Manila, on Friday due to a pressing commitment.

He should congratulate himself.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo skipped the event, too.

Glory be, she did not miss anything.

The main event, meant to be the juiciest offering in the international boxing convention hosted by the Games and Amusements Board, turned out to be an insult to the sport of boxing itself.

It was billed as a regional championship. But after a flatfooted, muscle-bound swimming student from Cebu (drumbeated as the Pan Asia Boxing Association super featherweight king) was pitted against a thin, straying Thai cook, the fight was already a first-class flop before the comical combatants could enter the ring.

* * *

Among the invited guests at ringside was Mayor Willy Robles of Baras, jewel of a town in the province of Rizal.

Robles failed to see what he came for. But, instead of sulk, the youthful town executive next allowed himself to be hosted by former national cyclist Rolando Hiso to a dinner at Peter Lee's Hong Kong Teahouse at the corner of Mabini and U.N. Avenue.

Sipping exquisite Torres Brandy and savoring Mr. Lee's specialties, built around goat *caldereta*, steamed *lapu-lapu* in soy sauce and herbs, pancit canton seafood, Robles calmly forgot the failures and frustrations of the evening.

Actually, Robles had reason to feel cheated.

He motored all the way to Ermita with top councilor Monet Matignas, hoping to pick up pointers on how to boost their sports development program in Baras.

Robles and Matignas returned to their rustic town empty-handed. What they witnessed at Baywalk was an exercise in futility, a hilarious demo on how not to put up a boxing card.

* * *

Anyway, Robles returned Hiso's hospitality with a native lunch at his farm in Baras on Monday.

The fare, glorious replay of the days when the Pasig River was still alive and rich in marine wonders, was out of this world: *kandule sa miso, ginataang hipong me kamias, inihaw na dalag, nilagang talong sawsaw sa balaw-balaw.*

Mayor Robles was singularly proud of the salad, featuring crisp lettuce cultivated chemical-free in various backyard farms which the municipality supports.

But how could the visitor ever forget the silvery *ayungin*, boiled not only with the usual guava fruit, but also with slices of fresh green mango, to perfect the poignantly sweetish broth?

Baras, at the foot of the Sierra Madre and kissed by Laguna de Bay, is indeed a food-hunter's paradise.

But it was not all chow, drink, relax. There was the fresh, dream-like scenery, with the slow ride now a hazy drive through a living Amorsolo landscape of sweet, simple countryside life in another lifetime.

Yes, there are still pieces of paradise, unspoiled by cruel commerce in golden Baras, which now live only in the memory of those mired in the concrete jungle, but actually only an hour by car from the metropolis.

Of course, other than the 16th-century stone church that's undergoing renovation, Robles takes great pride in the Baras River, maybe the only natural body of water of its kind in the area around Antipolo, Teresa, Morong and Tanay that flows clear, uncluttered by garbage and animal waste, and where bronze-skinned kids were seen swimming in blissful innocence.

* * *

Please don't go away, yet. This invitation won't be complete without mention of the town's amazing health-and-sports development program.

"The formula is simple: get kids dog-tired by letting them compete in games, and they don't resort to drugs and other nonsense," says Dr. Ramon Matignas, chief sports coordinator of the Baras Sports Council.

"An active people at play will always be happy and productive," assures Mayor Robles, a hardy former softball player and staffer at the Bureau of Soils.

To put these slogans into play, Robles offered a sharp solution to the usual leadership mess that had beset past programs.

Instead of only one manager, he assigned one coordinator for each of the eleven disciplines that include softball, badminton, football, basketball, *sikaran*, chess, etc., currently being developed in the municipality.

All the coordinators are directly under the mayor, although the program is quietly overseen by the pioneering Dr. Matignas, who had coolly surrendered his P3,000 monthly allowance in exchange for even development.

"What Dr. Matignas did was divide that allowance evenly among all the 10 other coordinators," explains Mayor Robles.

The sum may be very meager, only P300 each, but the output and results have been stupendous, a brisk sports development program operating away from the glare of media and the usual noise and smear of politics.

This is no exaggeration, but our national sports agencies should visit and witness a clinic, the selfless workings of a true, sincere grassroots sports program in Baras.

"Do you know that Baras, which has been relying on wells for its water supply all these years, will soon be serviced by Manila Water?" exclaims Councilor Monet Matignas.

Great news, indeed. Rain or shine, wet or dry, summer love and summer dreams go on and on in that gold mine of a town..

TOURNAMENT organizer Tisha Abundo (extreme left) with the lovely Petron belles, Kathy Sotejo, Kristia Ricana, Jessica Ticala, Daisy Jaen and Melisa Legaspi at yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan restaurant in Manila. ERIK ARAZAS

Tyros abound in Petron beach volley second leg

FRESH FACES FROM 10 DIFFERENT teams make up the cast competing in the second leg of the 2006 Petron Ladies Beach volleyball tournament on May 5-6 at the Manila Baywalk.

Except for Jessica Ticala of PSBA, the rest of the ladies are seeing action for the first time in the four-leg event sponsored by Petron and held in cooperation with Speedo.

The Lanuevo sisters, Genevieve and Jennifer, ruled the first leg of the event held at the Clearwater Country Club in Clark Field, Pampanga, beating the duo of Lorna dela Cruz and Chariza Castro.

"While I have a new teammate, this is our second time together, so we have an idea how to go about it," Ticala said during the PSA Forum, the public sports program sponsored by Pagcor and Mayor Lito Atienza.

Unpredictable Bulls seek key win

EVEN DURING PRACTICE, RED BULL has been running its plays way off its usual rhythm.

The Bulls are in such a state of disarray that they feel a win against slumping Sta. Lucia Realty at 4:40 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum in the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup could somehow pull them out of their misery.

"One win isn't going to solve our problem but we need this to get out of a slump," said coach Yeng Guiao after Red Bull walloped Barangay Ginebra to halt the team's four-game slide.

"But we can't be happy with this win alone. We must get more wins to get back on track."

The Gin Kings play the Purefoods Giants later at 7:35 p.m. also hoping to arrest an appaling skid after a 2-0 start.

With four victories and five setbacks, the Gin Kings are just half a game up on the Bulls.

The Giants (7-3) are just two games behind the front-running San Miguel Beermen after defeating the Alaska Aces in an out-of-town sortie last week.

Just like the Bulls, the Realtors are also in deep trouble following setbacks against the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals and the Coca-Cola Tigers that kept them in the cellar with a dismal 2-7 record.

During their overtime defeat to the Tigers, Dennis Espino, Kenneth Duremdes and Marlou Aquino were out of commission.

Against the Phone Pals, Asi Taulava tore to shreds the defense of the Realtors in the paint as the 6-foot-9 Aquino continued to sit in the sidelines.

"We even struggled in practice and tried a lot of things," said Guiao, who lamented the team's poor defense in the paint and atrocious free throw shooting. "Those are the factors that bugged us in past games."

Meanwhile, a weary Purefoods side thinks dominance of the boards will be the key element against Ginebra.

"Playing three games in seven days, including one provincial game, is tough," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio. "Rebounding will be a crucial factor against Ginebra. This is one department we want to win." *June Navarro*

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel	9	2
Purefoods	7	3
Coca-Cola	6	4
Talk 'N Text	5	5
Ginebra	4	5
Red Bull	4	6
Alaska	4	6
Air21	4	7
Sta. Lucia	2	7

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Red Bull vs Sta. Lucia
7:35 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Purefoods

Bayron grabs ST golf Baguio leg lead by 2

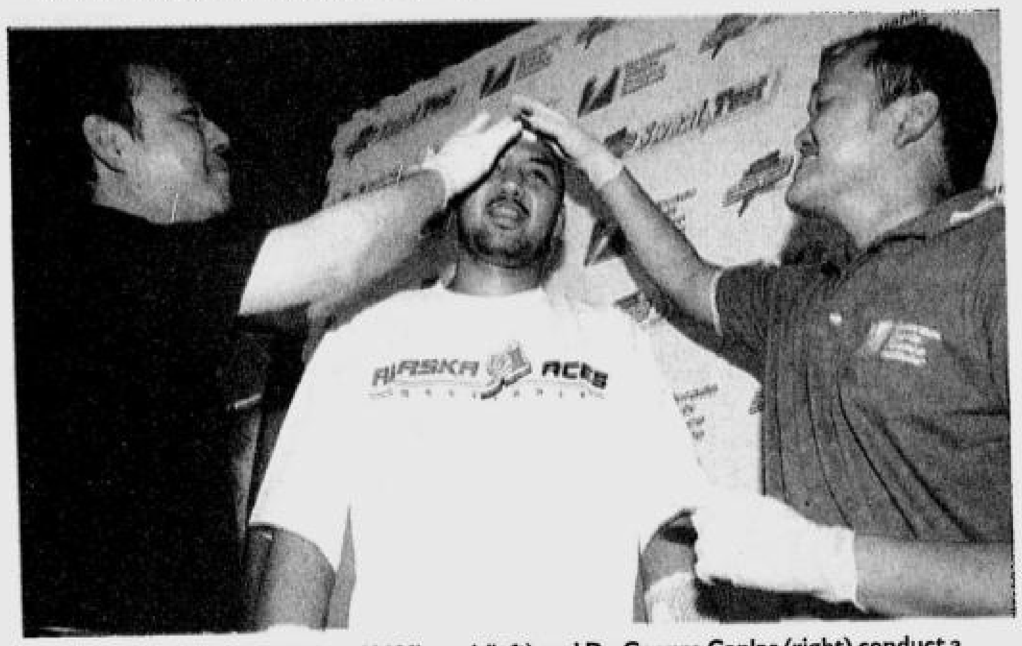
BAGUIO—JAY BAYRON BIRDied the 18th hole for a 2-under-par 59 and a two-shot lead over Southeast Asian Games teammate Mike Bibat after yesterday's opening round of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour's kickoff leg at the Baguio Country Club course here.

Bayron made five birdies against three bogeys as he became the only player among the 28 starters in the championship division to break par.

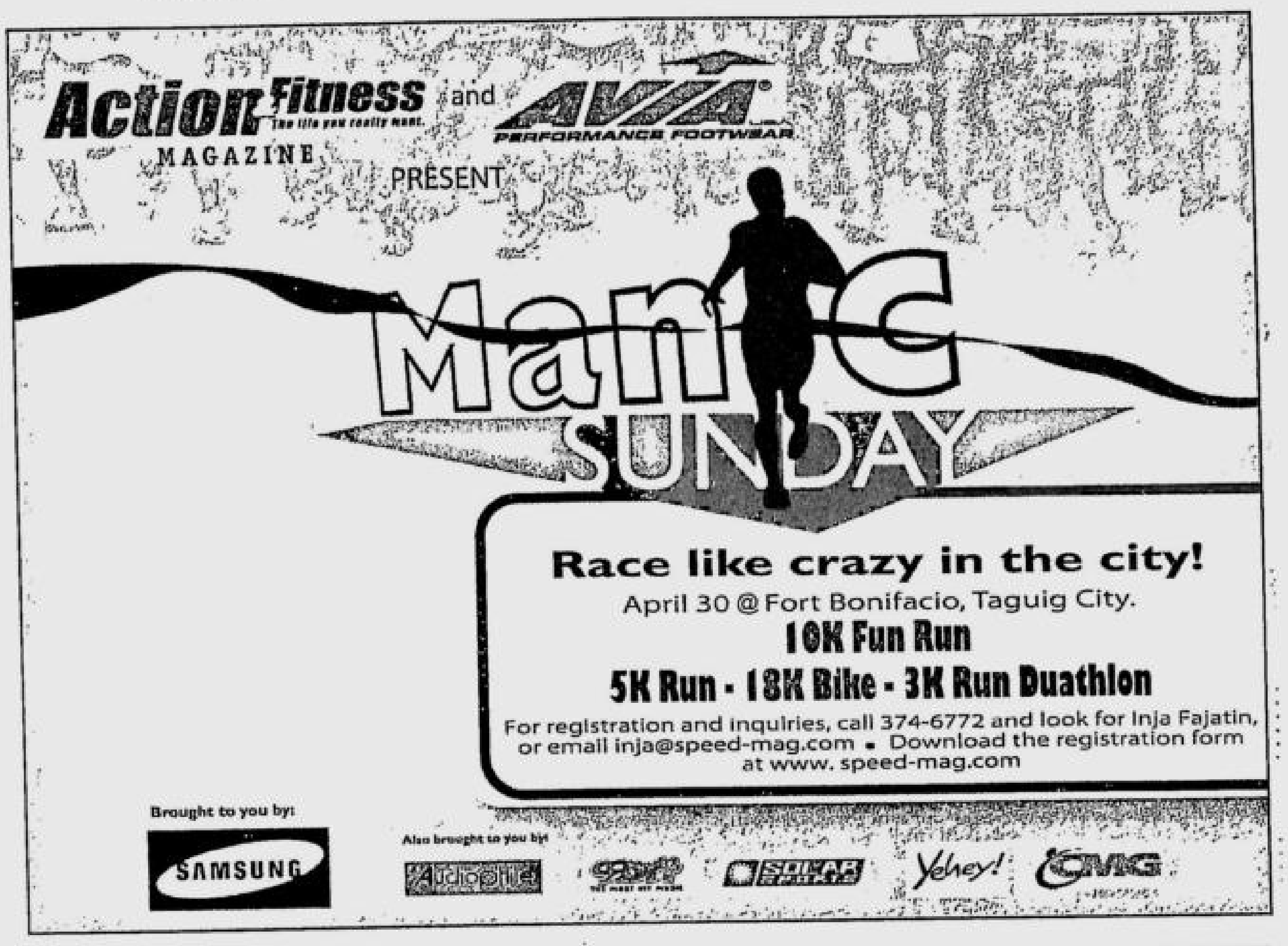
Bibat failed to solve the speed of the greens and settled for an even-par 61 for solo second, a stroke up on Ferdinand Aunzo and veteran Dave Hernandez.

Marvin Dumandan, winner of last month's DHL WWWExpress Open, shot a 64 and was in a three-way tie for eighth with Jonel Ababa and National Caddies Open champion Jessie Balasabas.

Louie Siapno (70) paced Class C and Vincent Tiong (79) took the solo lead in Class D of men's play, while Kim Ji-eun (81), Nanette Filler (81), Nora Sy and Lulu Uson (both 91) were the early leaders in ladies action.



GATORADE SWEAT TEST: Dr. Shi Xiaocai (left) and Dr. George Canlas (right) conduct a "Sweat Test" on the Alaska Aces' Jeffrey Cariaso during a press presentation yesterday at the Adidas Sports Camp at The Fort in Taguig City. The physical exam enables doctors to determine the amount of sodium, potassium and carbohydrates, among other minerals that athletes lose while they are in the heat of battle. Top local and foreign health specialists are helping athletes and other people with active lifestyles dish out their optimum performances through the Gatorade Sports Science Institute. TEXT BY MARC REYES, PHOTO BY ERIK ARAZAS



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Dela Cruz averts RP shutout in 9-ball qualifying

SHIELA DELA CRUZ OVERCAME CHINESE Taipei's Kao Shu-pin, 7-5, yesterday to lead the winners at the start of the qualifying round of the Enerva Asian 9-ball Tour Ladies Championship at Paeng's Skybowl at Robinson's Galleria in Mandaluyong.

A crucial miscalculation by the Taiwanese ace on the No. 5 ball allowed Dela Cruz to take a 3-2 lead that launched her to victory in the race-to-seven match.

The 29-year-old Dela Cruz, third placer in the 2002 Asian 8-ball championship in Singapore won by compatriot Rubilen "Bingkay" Amit, set up a clash with Japan's Chihiro Kawahara, who got a bye in the first round.

But the other Filipino hopefuls—Johanna Dee, Bing Flores, Ces Marquez, Jargelyn Maldonado and Jingle David—dropped their first matches.

Dee bowed to Chou Chieh-yu Chou of Chinese-Taipei, 3-7; Flores lost to Angeline Magdalena Ticoalu of Indonesia, 1-7; Marquez yielded to Mika Muneta of Japan, 2-7; Maldonado was whitewashed by Lai Hui-shan of Chinese-Taipei, 0-7; and David lost to Masami Nouchi of Japan, 3-7.

Marquez, Maldonado and David got first-round byes.

Another Filipino, Mary Ann Basas, was battling Tan Hsiang-ling Tan of Chinese-Taipei at presstime.

Other winners included Japan's Sakiko Namiki, Chinese-Taipei's Su I-yun Su, Lin Yuan-chun Lin and Tsai Pei-chen, and Korea's Won Hyun-ji.

Sixteen slots are up for grabs in the double-elimination qualifying round.

The main event gets going today at the same venue and will be aired live on IBC 13 and Solar Sports from 1 p.m. The major prizes are $10,000 to the champion, $5,000 to the runner-up and $2,500 each to the losing semifinalists.

Seeded to the main draw are 2005-06 world women's champion Kim Ga-young of South Korea, Amit and Irish Ranola of the Philippines, Jennifer Chen and Liu Shin-men of Chinese-Taipei, Akimi Kajitani of Japan, Desak Kasih Aryati and Nova Floura Rachmawati of Indonesia, Pan Xiaoting and Zhou Mengmeng of China and Chai Zeet Huey and Hoe Shu Wah of Singapore. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

JVC eyes record Davao field

ANOTHER RECORD-SETTING FIELD IS EXPECTED to see action in the Davao leg of the JVC Regional Badminton Championships, which fires off May 1-5 at the Wheels 'N More Badminton Club in Davao City. A bunch of participants are expected to beat the deadline for registration today for the three categories on tap—elite, junior and intercollegiate. Fees are pegged at P100 for single entry event and P150 for those playing in two or three events. For details, call Wheels 'N More Badminton Club in Bajada (082 -225-5700/082-300-0800) or check website at www.jvcbadminton.com or e-mail at jvcbadminton@hotmail.com or call 0917-8050702, 0917-8050601 and 0917-5288970 (Nelson).

P4.4-M Makati cockpit set

A TOTAL OF P4.4 MILLION IS AT STAKE WHEN the "Summer Salpukan 6-cock derby" starts today at the Makati Coliseum. More than 75 matches will spice up the first day of action starting at 5 p.m. Sponsor is B-Meg Derby Ace. Promoters explained that P3 million in cash will go to the winners while two brand new Toyota cars, now on display at the Makati Coliseum lobby, will go to the fastest win champions. Two motorcycles will be given to the champion handlers. Cockers and breeders may still field an entry on April 29, May 2, 4 and 6. The finals will be on May 11 and 13. Entry fee is only P11,000. For more details, please call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

SPORTSWATCH

SJC slates 80 fights today

LEADING METRO MANILA COCKERS PUT THEIR bets into action today in a special 5-cock derby starting at 5 p.m. today at the San Juan Coliseum. More than 80 fights are slated in the event sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Guaranteed prize is P700,000. Members of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines will support the event. Meanwhile, the Super Big Event 7-cock derby gets going also at the SJC on April 29. Top provincial cockers are vying, said organizer Patrick Antonio.

RACING TIPS

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Bear Cat (5), Twiggy's Charm (4), Shining Speed (2), Treasure Island (1)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Money for Rap (4), Please Don't Stop (4), Field Star (3), Run Like D'Wind (7), Real Tough (8)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Jet Suiter (11), Even Now (8), Romanticist (3), Guardian (7), Iron Hand (4)
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Pyramid Relaunch (6), Prince Valiant (10), Quant Je Puis (8), Big Boss (12), Ocean Cookie (4), Demolition Jack (11)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Common Goal (2), Mary Jane Bomb (1), Skip Away (7), Pampanga Queen (4), Bomb Shell (5)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Play It Again (7), Valentine Girl (8), Habagat (4) Cash Mc Call (2)
Race 7—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Red Phoenix (4), She Boom (9), Formidable Jaeda/Smiling Jaeda (10), Richie Rich (11), Nico's Incharge (1), Magical Surf (2)
Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)—Alexis Magic (5), Ginger Candy (3), Sand Pebbles (1), Angel Of Light (6)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—American Inggo (2), Tribeca (3), Chabacana (11), Smooth Strike (6), Fernan Ikaw Pa Rin (10), War General (12)

Finals preview: Lions nip Archers

NOEL GUZMAN BURIED A THREE-POINTER with 18 seconds left to lift the San Beda All-Stars to a heart-stopping 89-88 win over their La Salle counterparts, sealing a winner-take-all clash between them for the Total-Filoil-Flying V Homegrown Cup championship at the San Juan gym.

The one-game showdown between the Green Archers and the Red Lions is set on May 6.

Trailing, 87-86, Guzman came through with the trey for the unbeaten Red Lions.

San Beda's victory slammed the door on the Letran Knights, who crushed University of the Philippines, 78-65, and were praying for a La Salle win to stay in contention.

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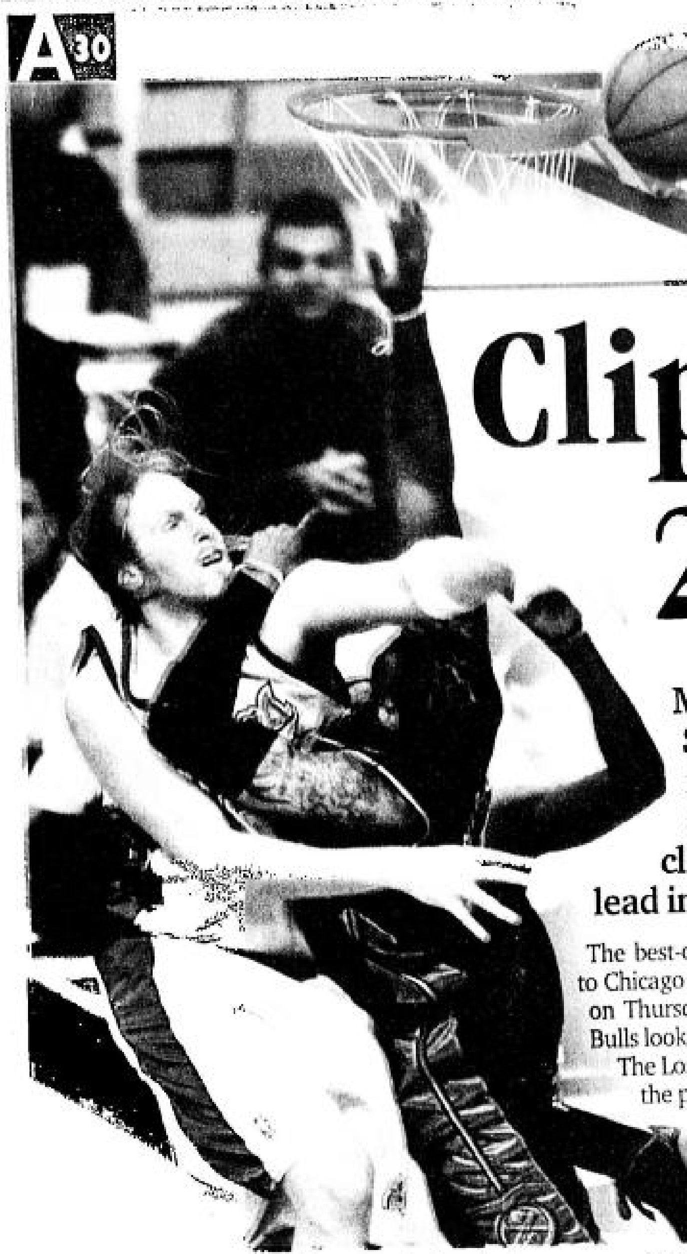
SPORTS

Clippers, Heat grab 2-0 playoff leads



CLIPPERS center Chris Kaman rejects a shot by Nuggets star Carmelo Anthony. AP

MIAMI—LED BY A 22-POINT DISPLAY FROM Shaquille O'Neal and double figure efforts from six players, the Miami Heat fought off a furious comeback by the Chicago Bulls to claim a 115-108 victory on Monday and a 2-0 lead in their Western Conference quarterfinal.

The best-of-seven series now shifts to Chicago for Games three and four on Thursday and Sunday with the Bulls looking to avoid the sweep.

The Los Angeles Clippers, back in the playoffs for the first time in nine years, also took charge of their quarterfinal easing past the Denver Nuggets, 98-87 to head to Colorado up, 2-0.

As usual, the Heat's two all-stars O'Neal and Dwyane Wade headlined the Miami effort but the supporting cast also made a big contribution.

"We had six guys in double figures but we didn't finish again and that disturbs me," Riley told reporters. "And it should disturb our players that we put ourselves in jeopardy after working so hard and playing so well. It happened the other night as well.

In Los Angeles, Cuttino Mobley bagged 21 points and Elton Brand added 19 points and 11 rebounds sparking the Clippers over the Nuggets.

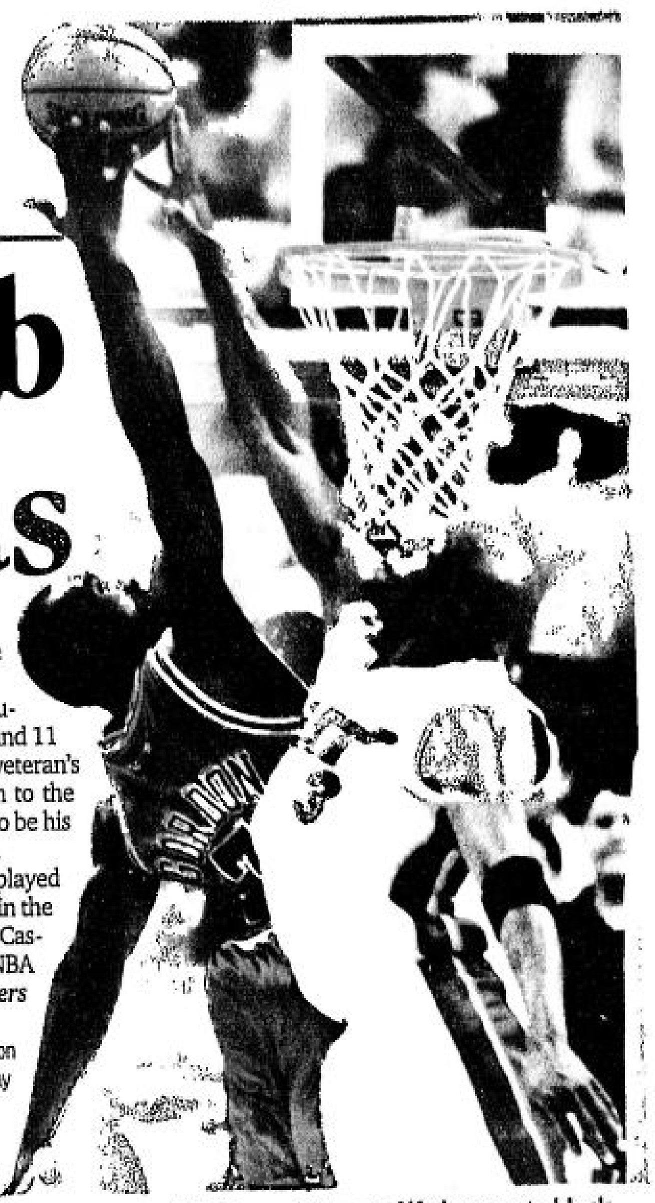
Sam Cassell added a double-double with 13 points and 11 assists but the 13-year veteran's most valuable contribution to the young Clippers continues to be his experience and leadership.

"We played solid man, played solid on defense and we win the game just like that," said Cassell, who owns two NBA championship rings. *Reuters*

NBA on TV:

SOLAR SPORTS—Washington vs Cleveland (live at 7 a.m., replay at 5:30 p.m. tomorrow)

SPORTSPLUS—Sacramento vs San Antonio (live at 9:30 a.m., replay at 7 p.m.); Indiana vs New Jersey (delayed telecast at 9:30 p.m., replay tomorrow at 2:30 p.m.)



HEAT guard Dwyane Wade soars to block the Bulls' Ben Gordon. AP

Motor show opens today

TRANS SPORT SHOW 2006, THE COUNTRY'S hottest and longest running annual motoring event, opens today at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B. Special guests for the ribbon-cutting ceremony are Transportation secretary Ret. Gen. Leandro Mendoza, Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzales and MMDA traffic operations chief Angelito Vergel De Dios. The shows open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. until April 30, 2006. The show's organizers, Tradeshow International, Inc. (TSI) are active supporters and promoters of motor sport. TSI is also an active partner of the Asian Festival of Speeds (AFOS), Asia's premier motosport event comprised of the FIA-sanctioned Asian Touring Car Championship, Formula BMW Asia and Porsche Carrera Cup Asia. The Trans Sport Show Cup Open Class Competition will feature several 50s to 70s era European, American and Japanese cars that were successfully raced during their time in restored pristine condition.

NBA suspends 2

ARTEST REUTERS

MIAMI—FORWARD UDONIS HASLEM OF THE Miami Heat and Ron Artest of the Sacramento Kings were each suspended for one NBA playoff game by the league on Monday.

Haslem was sanctioned for throwing his mouthpiece toward referee Joey Crawford on Saturday, the same day Artest hit Manu Ginobili of San Antonio in the head with his forearm.

Haslem missed the Heat's 115-108 victory over Chicago and will return for Game Three.

Haslem was ejected in the opening half of the Heat's 111-106 win in Game 1. Artest will miss Game 2 of his Western Conference series on Tuesday.

His incident with Ginobili occurred in the third period of the Spurs' 122-88 win. *AP*

Appleby eyes more success

HOUSTON—ALTHOUGH COMFORTABLY on track for the most successful season of his career, Houston Open champion Stuart Appleby is taking nothing for granted.

The 34-year-old from Cohuna in Australia won his second PGA Tour title of the year in record-equaling style on Sunday but is reluctant to accept that his game has now reached new heights.

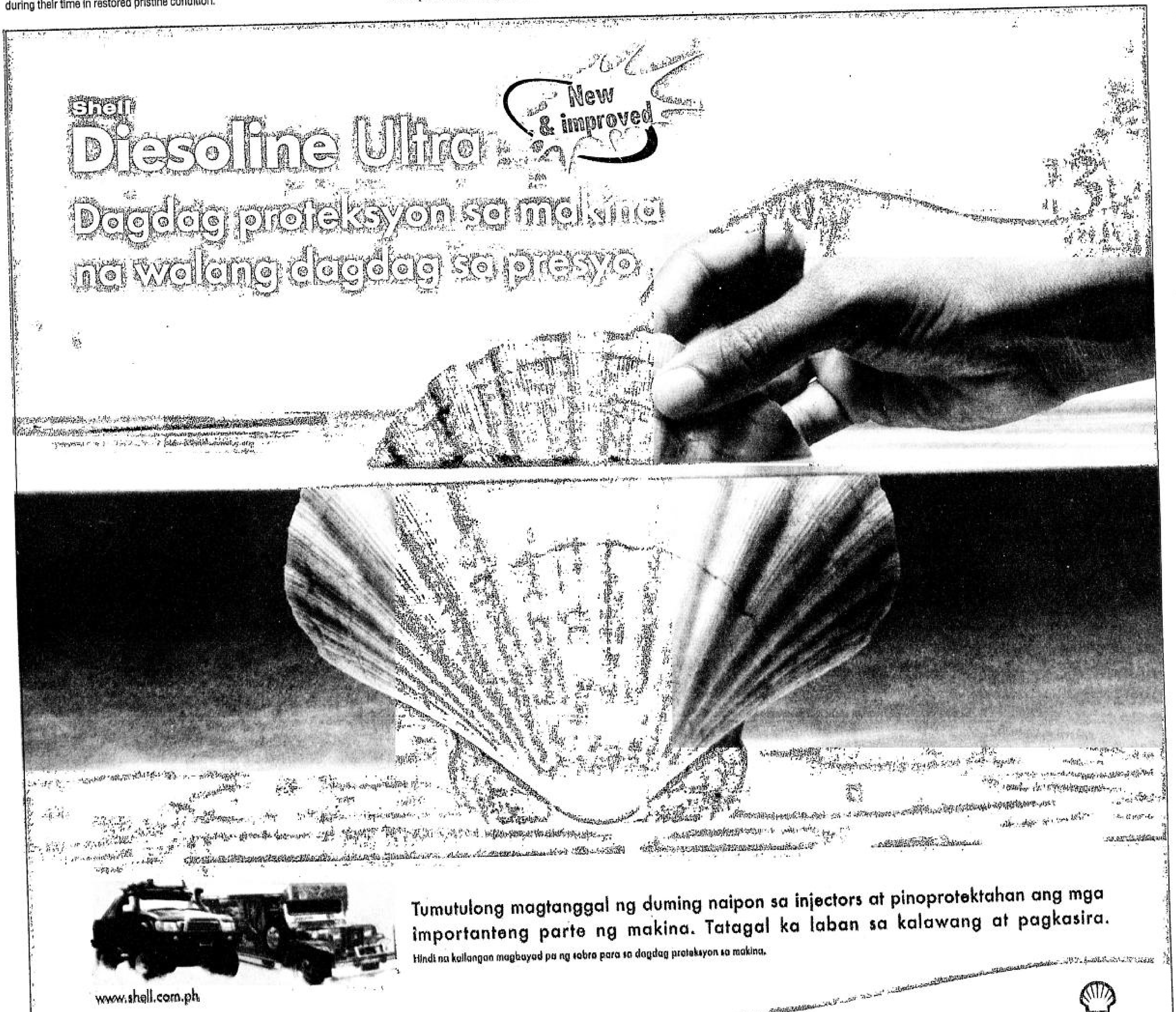
"I need to play more like this," Appleby told reporters after romping to a six-shot victory at the Redstone Golf Club.

"I don't feel like winning twice has put me on another level. It's the next level on paper, but I need to keep doing this stuff for a long time. I've had good chances to win twice in previous years and didn't.

"I don't know if a player ever thinks that he's at the next level," added the big-hitting Australian, who lies fourth in the PGA Tour money list with $2,422,902. "I think we always climb through those levels very slowly. Sometimes we don't even know we pass them."

It was the first time Appleby has managed to win more than once in a single tour season.

Despite his reluctance to believe he may be on the verge of achieving bigger things, he conceded his play at Redstone was good enough to put him into major contention. *Reuters*



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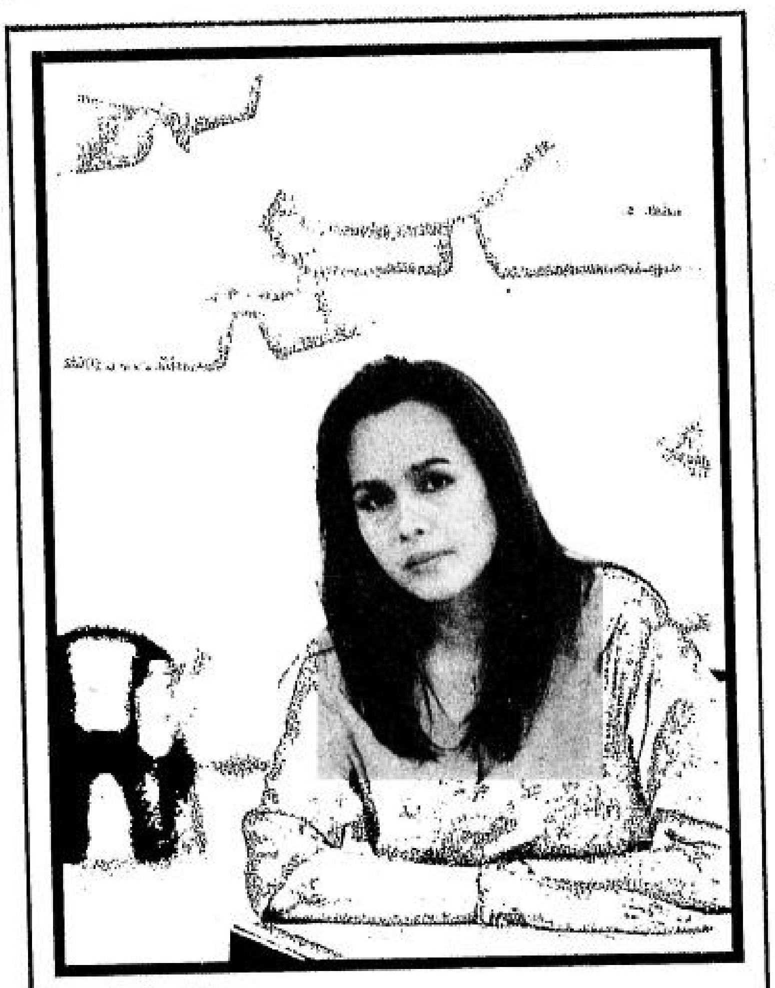


'Nearer, my God, to Thee'

(CHAT SILAYAN, 1960-2006)

"Coming back to the Lord gave me a certain balance in life. I felt myself being anchored, finding meaning, coming home. I saw miracles everywhere.

Once you find the Lord, you realize that your life is not just for yourself. Life here on earth is just a preparation for the afterlife. We have to help others.

Mysteries are not solved overnight. God wants us to go through the process, because He is teaching us wisdom. If we get the answer right away, we don't learn the lesson."

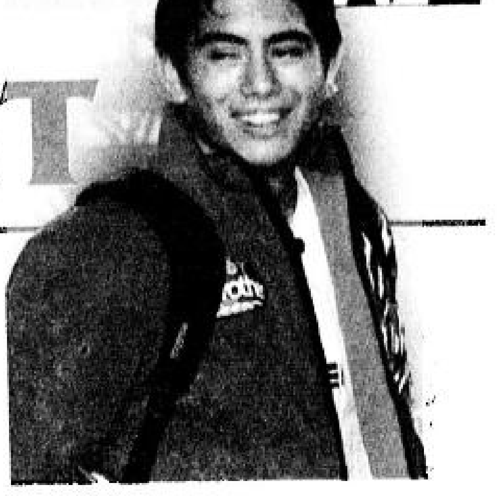
'PBB' teens 'artistahin'

By Nini Valera

SET AGAINST A STREET PARTY ATMOSPHERE, the launch on Sunday night of "Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition" brought the ABS-CBN reality show into the realm of "Rebel Without A Cause" and other metaphors of teenage angst and sensibility.

The launch closed to traffic over the week

PBB TEENS/ A2-7



GERALD Anderson

RODEL ROTONI

OPENING TODAY

Slither

Stars Nathan Fillion, Elizabeth Banks, Michael Rooker, Gregg Henry

Directed by James Gunn

Something sinister and, yes, slimy is growing underground, in the sleepy town of Wheelsy. When the cattle end up mutilated and girls disappear without a trace, the sheriff (Fillion) and his team must defeat the evil force threatening to devour the world. Pete Vonder of Film Threat is impressed: "Finally, we have a horror film that recaptures the schlock-y spirit of the 1980s … It has no pretensions to high art. [It] isn't great filmmaking… It is, however, a thoroughly entertaining effort." Says Matt Singer of the Village Voice: "[It] allegorizes living-dead horror as a critique of the American heartland's boundless gluttony… [The director] doesn't reinvent the wheel, but he does tighten its spokes a bit with some terrifying sequences and a witty, deadpan screenplay." Stephen Whitty of Newark Star-Ledger raves: "Strictly a fun B-movie horror, on the order of 'Tremors.'"

The Sentinel

Stars Michael Douglas, Kiefer Sutherland, Eva Longoria, Kim Basinger

Directed by Clark Johnson

The most trusted Secret Service agent (Douglas) in Washington DC is suspected of plotting to kill the president. He must use his skills to prove his innocence and catch the real assassin. Producer and lead star Douglas describes it as "unpredictable and topical … it has a few twists and turns." Critics are unconvinced. Complains Michael Phillips of the Chicago Tribune: "After a solid first [act], [it] wobbles and lurches and starts unsurprising you with its non-surprises." Eleanor Ringel Gillespie of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution comments: "[It's] worth a look if you're in the mood for some slick

OPENING/ A2-6

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CINEMA 4 THE WILD GP
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MUSIC MUSEUM

APRIL 26 ,2006	FREESTYLE & POPS FERNANDEZ	8:00PM
APRIL 27 & 28 2006	WILLIE NEPOMUCENO	8:00PM

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P1,000 & P800
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Musical Director Danny Favis Set Designer Mio Infante Costumes Eric Pineda
Lighting Designer Voltaire de Jesus Choreography Liesl Laforteza
MAGIC 89.9 DREAM FM 923 JOEY

SHANG CINEPLEX
① THE WILD MTRCB: GP 1:40, 3:45, 5:50, 7:55, 10:00 LMF
② THE SENTINEL MTRCB: PG-13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00 LMF
③ WHEN A STRANGER CALLS MTRCB PG-13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
④ SLITHER MTRCB. R-18
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MOVIE GUIDE
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Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) THE WILD GP
2 (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL PG13
3 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS PG13
4 (DOLBY) SLITHER R18
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) SILENT HILL R13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) SLITHER
2 (SDDS) ICE AGE-2
3 (DTS) EIGHT BELOW
4 GOLD (DTS) THE WILD
5 GOLD (DOLBY) SILENT HILLS
6 GOLD (SDDS) WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
7 GOLD (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
8 (DOLBY STEREO) SUBMERGED
9 (DOLBY STEREO) PAMAHIIN
10 (DOLBY STEREO) D' LUCKY ONES

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 (DOLBY) THE WILD
3 (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
4 (DOLBY) SLITHER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
2 (DTS) SLITHER
3 (DOLBY) D' LUCKY ONES
4 PAMAHIIN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 (DOLBY) SLITHER
3 (DTS) WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
4 PAMAHIIN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 PAMAHIIN
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
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3 (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW
4 (DTS) HOUSE OF FURY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) PAMAHIIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 THE SENTINEL
2 THE WILD
3 SILENT HILLS
4 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
2 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL
3 (DOLBY) WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
4 (DOLBY) THE WILD

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
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2 SLITHER
3 PAMAHIIN
4 THE SENTINEL
5 THE WILD

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metropolis star cinema
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2 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
3 SILENT HILLS
4 THE WILD

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
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2 PAMAHIIN
3 THE SLITHER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 THE SENTINEL
2 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL

THEATRES
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1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D' LUCKY ONES

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
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D' LUCKY ONES
RESERVED
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Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 THE WILD / WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
2 SLITHER
3 (DTS EX) THE SENTINEL
4 D' LUCKY ONES

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 PAMAHIIN

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 ULTRAVIOLENT
2

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) PLEASE CALL
2 ICE AGE-2
3
4 (DTS)

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
2 PAMAHIIN
3 (DTS) D' LUCKY ONES
4 SLITHER
5 THE WILD

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 WHEN THE STRANGERS CALL
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 FINAL DESTINATION-3
4 PAMAHIIN

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SILENT HILLS
2 D' LUCKY ONES

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

> 'We offer night swimming *sa gabi*'

HOST: WHAT COURSE ARE YOU PLANNING to take up in college?

Guest: Nursing.

Host: Oh, really? For export! *Saan mo naman gustong magtrabaho?*

Guest: *Sa ospital, po.* (*E 'di kasi naman…*)

* * *

Host: How was winter in the States when you were there earlier this year?

Guest: Oh it was so cold and snow! (Ah, so…)

* * *

Host: How often do you get to travel to the States for shows?

Guest: It seldom and rarely. (*Isa ka pa!*)

* * *

Host: Why did you decide to take up Anthropology?

Guest: Because oftentimes, mankind is born on the human level! (That's so … profound?)

* * *

Host: What did you do last Holy week?

Guest: I just stayed home and watched TV. During Holy Week, I really like to watch *mga* Jesus something on TV. ("*Mga* Jesus something"? That's so specific!)

* * *

Host: Did you hear the latest about England's Prince Harry?

Co-host: Yes, he's finished his military studies and may serve in the elite royal household calvary! (One man's cavalry is Jesus' calvary!)

* * *

Host: Are you a night person?

Guest: Yes, I'm an owl. When others are already asleep, I'm wildly awake! (Control yourself—please!)

* * *

Host: When is your father coming?

Guest: He's expected to fly in sometimes today. (How many times does he plan to arrive in one day?)

* * *

Host: How did they know that the old biblical document comes from as far as the first century?

Guest: They established it with cartoon dating. (You mean carbon dating, don't you?)

* * *

Host: What's the special feature of your resort?

Guest: We offer night swimming *sa gabi*. (*Kulit.*)

* * *

Host: How did you feel when you won the award?

Guest: I did not expect *talaga*, so it was a mix in motion! (Mix in motion?—Oh, mixed emotions!)

* * *

Host: What can you say about this contestant's performance?

Juror: Good! *'Yung* improvement *niya* is getting better! (Wish we could say the same about you.)

* * *

Host: What field in the arts are you the most active in?

Guest: I am a writer, *pero pinto pa rin ako*. (Show him the door, quick.)

* * *

Host: Do you think you will win tonight?

Guest: I hope, but it's all out to the judges! (You know what? You just lost.)

* * *

Host: Aside from singing, do you also want to be a TV host?

Guest: I like, but I'm scared—I might stumble my words! (Talk about a self-fulfilling prophecy!)

Music workshops

NATHAN Thomson, lead tutor on the Guildhall School of Music's award-winning "Connect" music education program, returns to the Philippines as bassist for the critically-acclaimed **Antonio Forcione** Quartet, and will spearhead the British Council's music workshops at the Crossroad 77 Convention Center in Quezon City on May 5, and at the SM Trade Hall-Cebu on May 7.

Thomson and Forcione will be joined by cellist **Jenny Adejayan** and percussionist **Adriano Pinto** in sharing improvisation technique, followed by master classes in half-day sessions.

The Antonio Forcione Quartet will also perform in concerts for audiences in Manila and Cebu. Call 3744822 (Manila) and 2330452 (Cebu). Online registration is also available through www.britishcouncil.org.ph.

Judges, please explain

FEEDBACK

From Hendry Estrada (henry.estrada@wfp.org), Rome, Italy:

I fully agree (along with majority of the regular viewers here in Italy) that Charisse should have been declared the "brightest" [in ABS-CBN's "Little Big Star."

At her age, she's so gifted and her singing style, projection, confidence and her voice quality would put to shame many of the Philippine's current crop of singers! *Siya lamang ang finalist na hindi kinakabahan ang viewers pag nag-peperform na siya*. Judges, please explain.

Happy family plus a huge entourage

RUSHES

KRIS Aquino

KRIS AQUINO AND James Yap were seen with a very big entourage at the Gateway Mall in Quezon City on Thursday. Also with them was Kris' son, Joshua. James was set to leave for Capiz, where his Purefoods team was scheduled to play the next day.

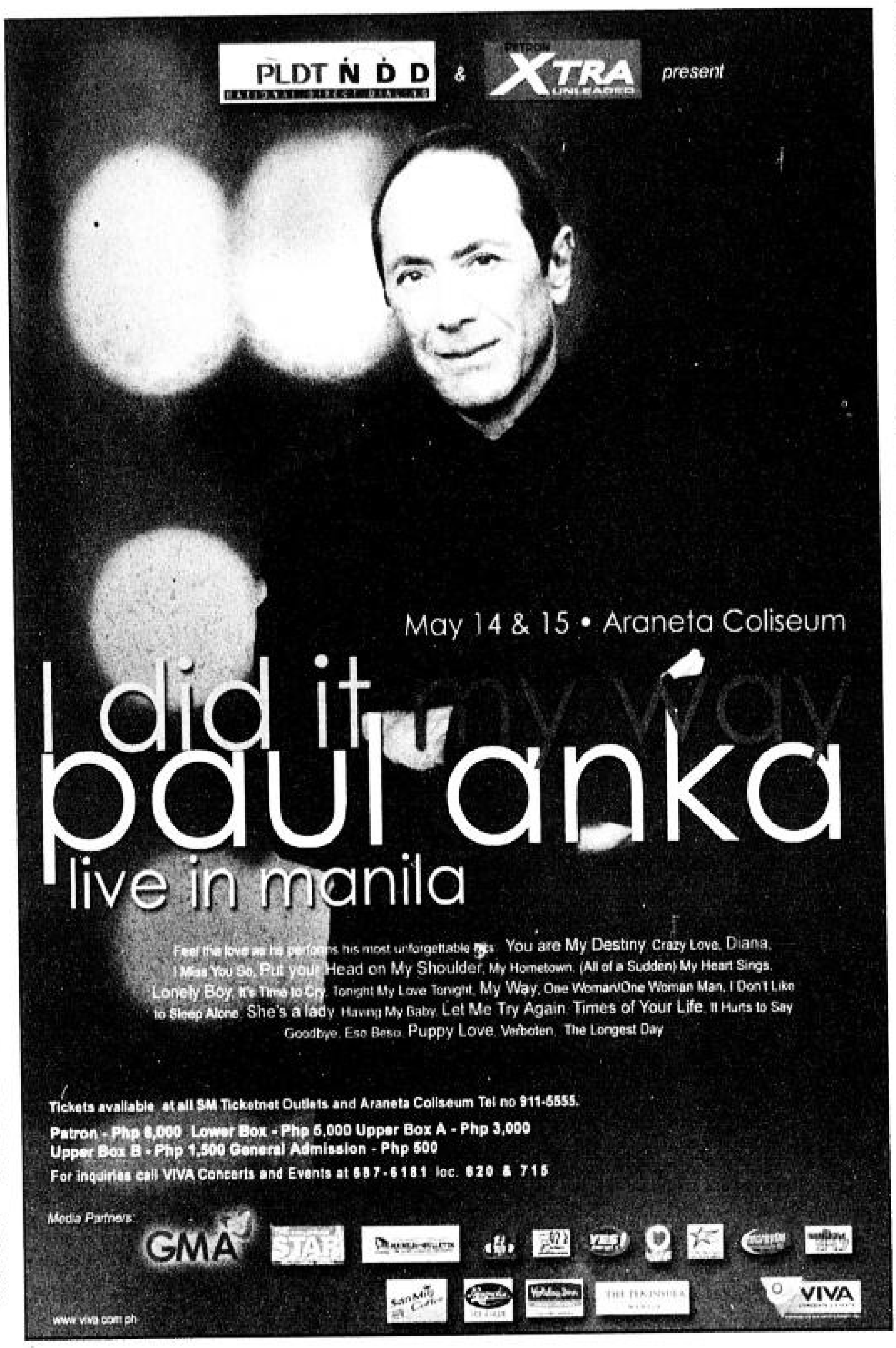
Date movies

"Ice Age 2" and "Eight Below," two popular kiddie movies, became big date fare for Tinseltown's popular couples. Seen at Greenbelt 3 in Makati City watching "Eight Below" were Gwen Garci and boyfriend Andrew Wolff who, once outside the cinema,

HAPPY/ A2-4

AN ALLY for Brangelina

SARAH Geronimo



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MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50	SLITHER THE WILD	D' LUCKY ONES 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	THE SENTINEL 2:10 / 4:30 / 6:50 / 9:10
ICE AGE 2 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 BASIC INSTINCT 2 7:10 / 9:50	PAMAHIIN 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	TRISTAN & ISOLDE 7:10 / 9:50 EIGHT BELOW 2:00 / 4:30	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

ALIMALL CINEMAS

1	D' LUCKY ONES 12:10 R3 / 1:45 / 4:00 / 6:15 / 8:30	2	THE SENTINEL 1:15 / 3:35 / 5:55 / 8:15	3	THE WILD
4	SILENT HILL	5	PAMAHIIN 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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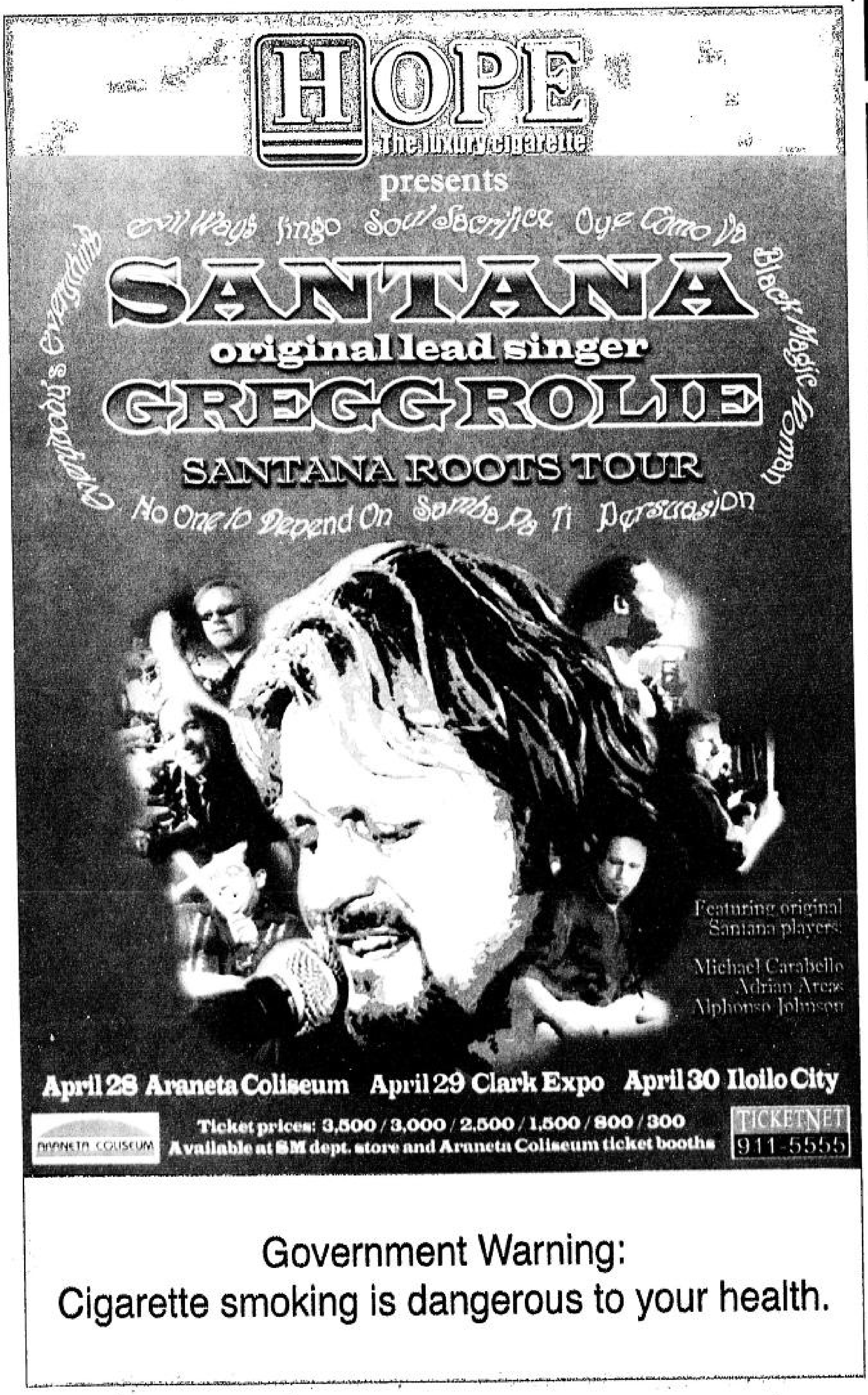

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4 THE WILD
5 SLITHER
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 PAMAHIIN
9 D' LUCKY ONES
10 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

ERMITA 538-7809 to 12

1 WHENA STRANGER CALLS
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 SILENT HILL
5 THE SENTINEL
6 SLITHER
7 THE WILD

METRO EAST 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 ICE AGE 2
2 SILENT HILL
3 THE WILD
4 D' LUCKY ONES
5 THE SENTINEL
6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
7 SLITHER
8 PAMAHIIN

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SILENT HILL
2 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
3 D' LUCKY ONES
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2
5 SLITHER
6 THE SENTINEL

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 SLITHER
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
2 SLITHER
3 THE WILD
4 THE SENTINEL

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2 PAMAHIIN
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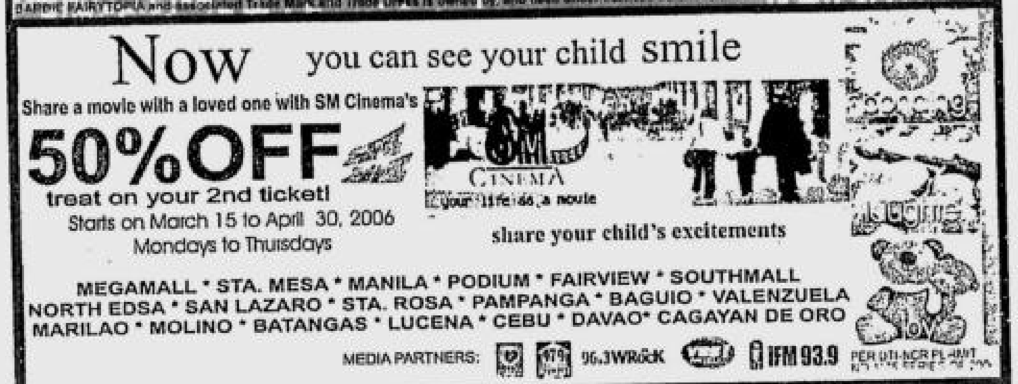
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THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
SENTINEL
CINEMA 2
THE WILD

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5 EIGHT BELOW
6 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
7 SUBMERGED
8 ICE AGE 2
9 PAMAHIIN
10 D LUCKY ONES
11 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

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2 D LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 THE WILD
5 SUBMERGED
6 EIGHT BELOW
7 SILENT HILL
8 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL

SM CITY DASMARINAS

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2 THE WILD
3 SENTINEL
4 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
2 SUBMERGED
3 VENOM
4 SILENT HILL
5 PAMAHIIN
6 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
7 SENTINEL
8 THE WILD
9 ICE AGE 2
10 EIGHYT BELOW
11 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 SILENT HILL
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 SENTINEL
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 PAMAHIIN
9 ICE AGE 2
10 SUBMERGED

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 SENTINEL
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
4 SILENT HILL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
2 SILENT HILL
3 THE WILD
4 SENTINEL
5 D LUCKY ONES
6 PAMAHIIN

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1 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
2 SUBMERGED
3 VENOM
4 EIGHYT BELOW
5 THE WILD
6 SENTINEL
7 PAMAHIIN
8 ICE AGE 2
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 TRISTAN & ISOLDE
11 D LUCKY ONES
12 SILENT HILL

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

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2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
4 SILENT HILL
5 ICE AGE 2
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 PAMAHIIN
9 SUBMERGED

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1 SILENT HILL
2 SENTINEL
3 THE WILD
4 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL

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2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 SILENT HILL

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❷ The Sentinel
❸ The Wild
❹ Silent Hill

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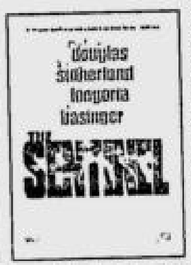

SILENT HILL

NOW SHOWING

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO

1 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
2 THE WILD
3 SENTINEL
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY MARILAO

1 BANDIDAS
2 PAMAHIIN
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 PAMAHIIN
4 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL

SM CITY BACOOR

1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE WILD
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 SENTINEL
8 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 D LUCKY ONES
2 THE WILD
3 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
4 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
2 SENTINEL
3 THE WILD
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 BANDIDAS
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY LUCENA

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 BANDIDAS
4 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY MOLINO

1 SENTINEL
2 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 PAMAHIIN

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 ICE AGE 2
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
4 THE WILD
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 PAMAHIIN
7 D LUCKY ONES
8 SENTINEL

SM CITY ILOILO

1 JUST FRIENDS
2 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 BANDIDAS
5 PAMAHIIN
6 RESERVED
7 RESERVED
8 TRISTAN & ISOLDE

SM CITY DAVAO

1 SENTINEL
2 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW
5 PAMAHIIN
6 THE WILD

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1 WHEN A STRANGERS CALL
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NICK Lachey AP

Happy family . . .

From page A2-3

acted like strangers. *Hmmm.* The "Ice Age 2" couples were much sweeter—Angel Locsin and Oyo Boy Sotto, and Danica Sotto and Purefoods cager Marc Pingris.

Go, Sarah G!

Sarah Geronimo is reportedly still basking in the glow of... standing ovations (!) from an obviously delighted Canadian audience at the Grand Baccus banquet hall in Toronto. She is touring Canada with "Night of the Champions" co-performers Rachelle Ann Go, Mark Bautista and Raymond Manalo.

Sarah's show-stoppers: "Forever's Not Enough," "Love You More" and a medley of Celine Dion tunes.

So in love

In New York, Nick Lachey told the Associate Press his divorce from Jessica Simpson is a "nasty situation," but he's not trying to hurt her with his revelations about their split—and, he still loves her.

Not allowed

AP also reports that Namibian authorities are clamping down on journalists trying to follow Brad Pitt, heavily pregnant Angelina Jolie and her two adoptive children. Namibian Prime Minister Nahas Angula said the couple should be left alone: "This lady is expecting... [and] harassment is not allowed in Namibia."

Unflagging

Tom Cruise has not toned down his enthusiasm at all now that fiancee Katie Holmes has given birth to their daughter, says another AP dispatch. The birth "was everything that we wanted it to be," the actor said on a TV show. "It was spiritual. It was powerful. It was indescribable," he said in the interview broadcast Friday. "What words can you use? It's still something that I'm processing and keep reliving."

Speechless? No way.

CHARLIE Sheen REUTERS

But I didn't

Charlie Sheen on Saturday denied charges from his estranged wife, Denise Richards, that he had been abusive toward her and their daughters and had threatened to kill her. Reuters reports that Sheen told "Entertainment Tonight co-anchor Mark Steins, "I maintain my integrity ...and focus on my children." He called Richards' move filing is "a heinous document of fiction."

Say it again, Sam

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

EVEN IF SUMMER IS "*SOBRANG INIT*" IN the Philippines, former "Pinoy Big Brother" housemate Sam Milby is staying for good "because Filipinos are my kind of people."

"America is where my family is and where I grew up, but I feel more at home in the Philippines," he told the entertainment press at his recent Jollibee commercial launch.

He is hot show biz property, too. The 22-year-old Fil-Am from Ohio says he wants to try everything—singing, modeling and hosting—but he's going easy on acting.

"[That's] until my Tagalog is '*malakas*,'" he said, apparently unaware that he had picked the wrong adjective. Of course he got away with it—everyone within a 30-meter radius was either deaf or smitten. Sam, a mainstay of "ASAP" on ABS-CBN is serious, though. He has hired a private tutor.

Frustration

"*Gusto ko matuto akong mas mabilis kasi ayoko hindi ko kaya maintindihan 'yung mga tao,*" Sam ventures in straight, if disjointed, Filipino.

On "ASAP," his co-hosts kid around in their native tongue and it frustrates him, he said, when he cannot join in the conversations.

This frustration extends to his occasional acting stints. "I cannot really get into the scene because I don't understand a thing the others are saying," Same lamented. "So I'm just standing there, waiting for my turn to speak and I feel like '*tanga.*'"

Asked if the interview could be done in Filipino since he seemed so eager to flaunt how much he had learned so far, the worried celebrity replied, "*Susubukan ko pero Taglish lang, hindi diretsong-diretsong Tagalog.*"

Not bad for someone born and raised in the US. Sam's mother, Elsie, is a native of Bulacan, where he had stayed while trying to get into local show business. He was first seen in a Close-Up commercial last year. His biggest exposure, though, was on "Pinoy Big Brother."

Initiation

His star rose suddenly, but he wasn't spared from the requisite initiation of rumors.

"I've learned how to deal with '*chismis*,'" Sam said. "If it's something completely untrue, I don't let it bother me at all. But, if I feel it's somewhat true and that I need to work on it, then I take it to heart." The worse bits hurled at him so far, he said, are about hygiene and sexual preference.

One that he welcomes, though, is that which links him to Toni Gonzaga. He revealed that when he came home home from Milan, where he did a couple of shows for The Filipino Channel last month, he brought Toni *pasalubong*.

Came the question then: "*Nililigawan mo ba si* Toni?"

"Well," Sam said, "I do like her. I'd like to get to know her parents first—I know that it's very important here in the Philippines."

Their busy schedules have prevented them from spending enough time to know one another," the young man said. But it looks like they will finally get the chance starting next month, when they start shooting a romantic comedy movie under Star Cinema.

Until then, he's a cheerful target for unabashed declarations of affection from admirers. During a concert recently in Tagaytay, shrieking Caviteñas competed for his attention—okay, even just a glance. When the winners of a raffle were called onstage, the emcee asked one of them, "Are you single?" the girl, named Ruth, took one heart-melting look at Sam and declared, "I was—but now I'm taken!"

Guess who's feverishly learning Tagalog, so he can start acting in local movies?

KISS ME, QUICK. Sam Milby and the Caviteña fan named Ruth.

ROUNDUP

'Silent Hill' makes noise

LOS ANGELES—A real scary movie bumped off the spoof variety at the box office.

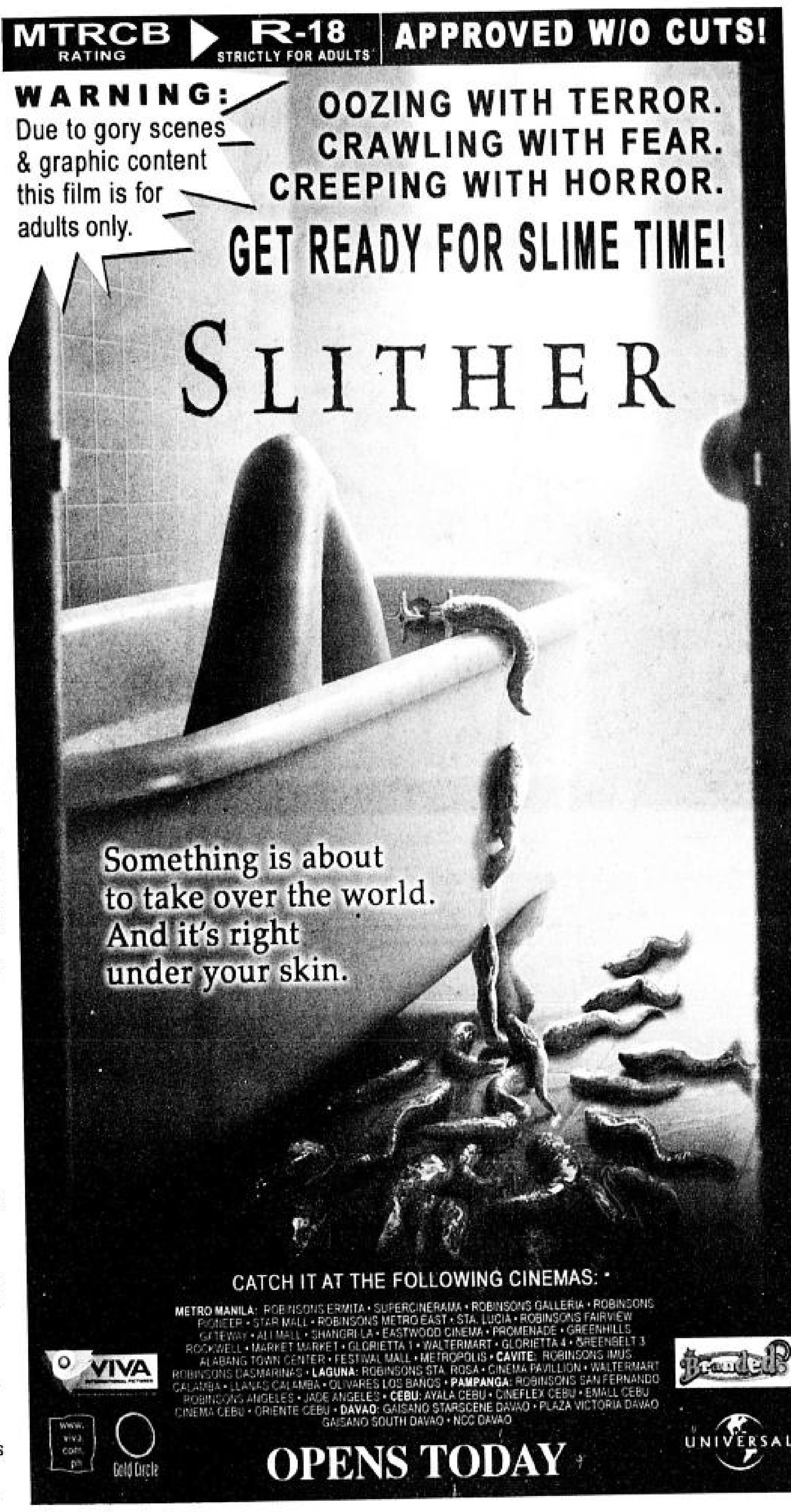
Sony's fright flick "Silent Hill," set in an eerie ghost town, debuted with $20.2 million taking over the top spot from the Weinstein Co. comedy "Scary Movie 4," which slipped to No. 2 with $17 million in its second weekend, according to studio estimates.

The White House assassination tale "The Sentinel," a 20th Century Fox thriller starring Michael Douglas, Kiefer Sutherland and Eva Longoria, opened in third place with $14.65 million. The weekend's other new major debut, Universal's George W. Bush-"American Idol" parody "American Dreamz" featuring Dennis Quaid and Hugh Grant, debuted a weak No. 8 with $3.7 million.

Two-thirds of the audience for "Silent Hill" was under 25.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc., official trackers:

1) "Silent Hill," $20.2M; 2) "Scary Movie 4," $17M; 3) "The Sentinel," $14.65M; 4) "Ice Age: The Meltdown," $12.8M; 5) "The Wild," $8.05M; 6) "The Benchwarmers," $7.3M; 7) "Take the Lead," $4.25M; 8) "American Dreamz" and "Inside Man," $3.7M (tie); 10) "Friends With Money," $3.55M. *AP*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"Silent Hill" debuted #1 at the U.S. boxoffice

HOLLYWOOD—Sold on its menacing atmosphere and twisted monsters, Sony Pictures' special effects driven action/horror pic **Silent Hill** crept to an estimated $20.2 million at 2,926 sites, claiming the most coveted #1 spot in North America.

Based on a popular series of video games, the nearly $100 million budgeted film drew about as many moviegoers as **Resident Evil** and **Underworld**. Both pictures also featuring killer babes fighting evil were released by Sony Pictures in North America.

Some comments from film critics:

"The closest you'll get to actually having a nightmare in a movie theatre." -- Keith Breese, FILMCRITIC.COM

"A genuinely creepy and deeply disturbing experience, as would be expected by fans of the games." -- Edward Douglas, COMINGSOON.NET

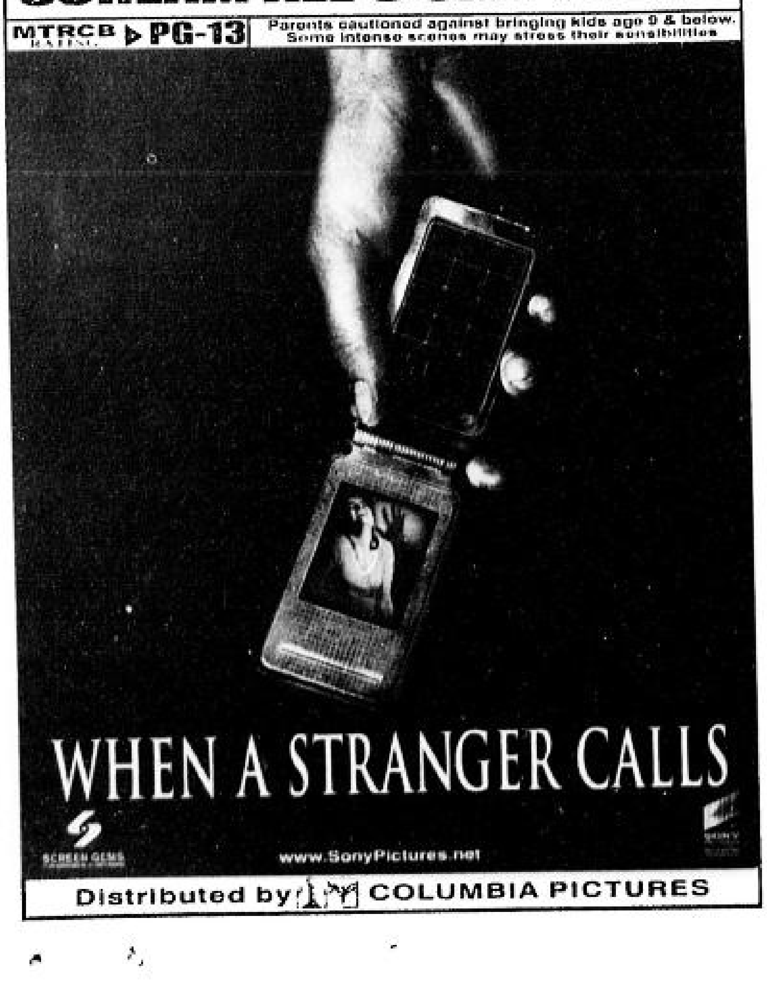
"It wants to get under your skin and unnerve you. It will grab you, shake you, and even yank your skin clean off if that's what it takes to affect you." -- Moriarty, AIN'T IT COOL MOVIE REVIEWS

"[The] first frigged-up, terrifyingly nonsensical hour ... generates a wealth of shivery imagery that I won't be able to soon forget. But, Lord, I think I may want to." -- Andrew Wright, THE STRANGER (SEATTLE)

Silent Hill truly is a feast for the eyes -- provided your eyeballs aren't too squeamish." -- Scott Weinberg, EFILMCRITIC.COM

ADVT.

Radha Mitchell and Laurie Holden in SILENT HILL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OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

Hollywood escapism that's done well enough, though not brilliantly." E! Online points out that it's "a tired conflation of 'In the Line of Fire' and 'The Bodyguard'" and that "it has already passed its sell-by date."

When a Stranger Calls

Stars Camilla Belle, Tommy Flanagan, Derek De Lint

Directed by Simon West

This remake of a 1979 thriller starring Carol Kane feeds on a babysitter's worst fears: being trapped in a house with a demented obscene phone-caller-slash-killer and equally maddening kids. Phil Villareal of the Arizona Daily Star is at first leery because the director's previous works are "Con Air" and "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider." "He's not exactly known as a paragon of restraint," but he comes up with "a scary optimization of the original … one of the premier horror films of recent years." Joe Leydon of Variety differs: "A bigger, yet blander, remake … It doesn't help that the plot mechanics creak much too loudly and the shameless contrivances are all too obvious." Wesley Morris of the Boston Globe gasps: "Even by the lowest standards, this is … frightless [and] cynically made." Lisa Rose of Newark Star-Ledger sums it up, wryly: "Dial M for mediocre."

The Wild

With the voices of Kiefer Sutherland, Jim Belushi, Janeane Garofalo

Directed by Steve "Spaz" Williams

The plot of this Disney CGI flick sounds awfully familiar: New York zoo animals (a lion, giraffe, anaconda, koala and squirrel), who are already used to the cushy life, gets mistakenly transported to the jungle. Frank Scheck of the Hollywood Reporter protests: "Isn't it too soon for a 'Madagascar' remake? [It] is relentlessly loud and ultimately exhausting." Jeanette Catsoulis of the New York Times also notices the "narrative resemblance," but points out the difference in animation styles: "'Madagascar' was all sharp edges and blocky slabs of uniform color, 'The Wild' is filled with softness and texture." Jack Garner of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle opines: "[It] offers consistent laughs, with fresh characters and writing."

Silent Hill

Stars Radha Mitchell, Sean Bean, Laurie Holden, Jodelle Ferland

Directed by Christophe Gans

Adapted from a popular Konami Horror Survival game, this spookfest centers on a woman (Mitchell) who's desperate to save her dying daughter (Ferland). She finds herself trapped in an alternate reality, a fog-clothed town of decay called Silent Hill, where she is joined by a policewoman (Holden) in the quest to save the child. Sean Clark reports in The Horror Channel website that the director "was concerned about how to transcribe darkness onscreen… I think it's very interesting to use high definition [cameras] specifically for the Darkness dimension." Joshua Tyler of Cinemablend.com compares it to another video game-turned-movie "Resident Evil": It's "tolerable, forgettable, horrible fun… If there's anything positive [about it], it's that Mitchell will get paid. This may not get her as much critical recognition, but it'll probably buy her a nice house in Beverly Hills."

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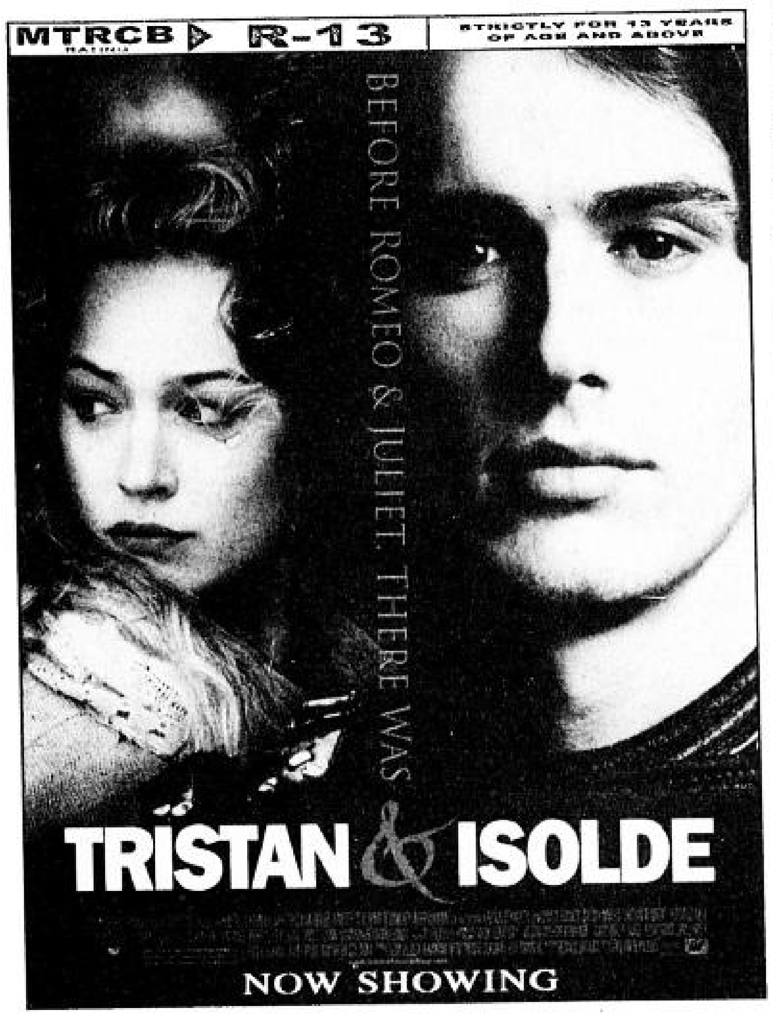

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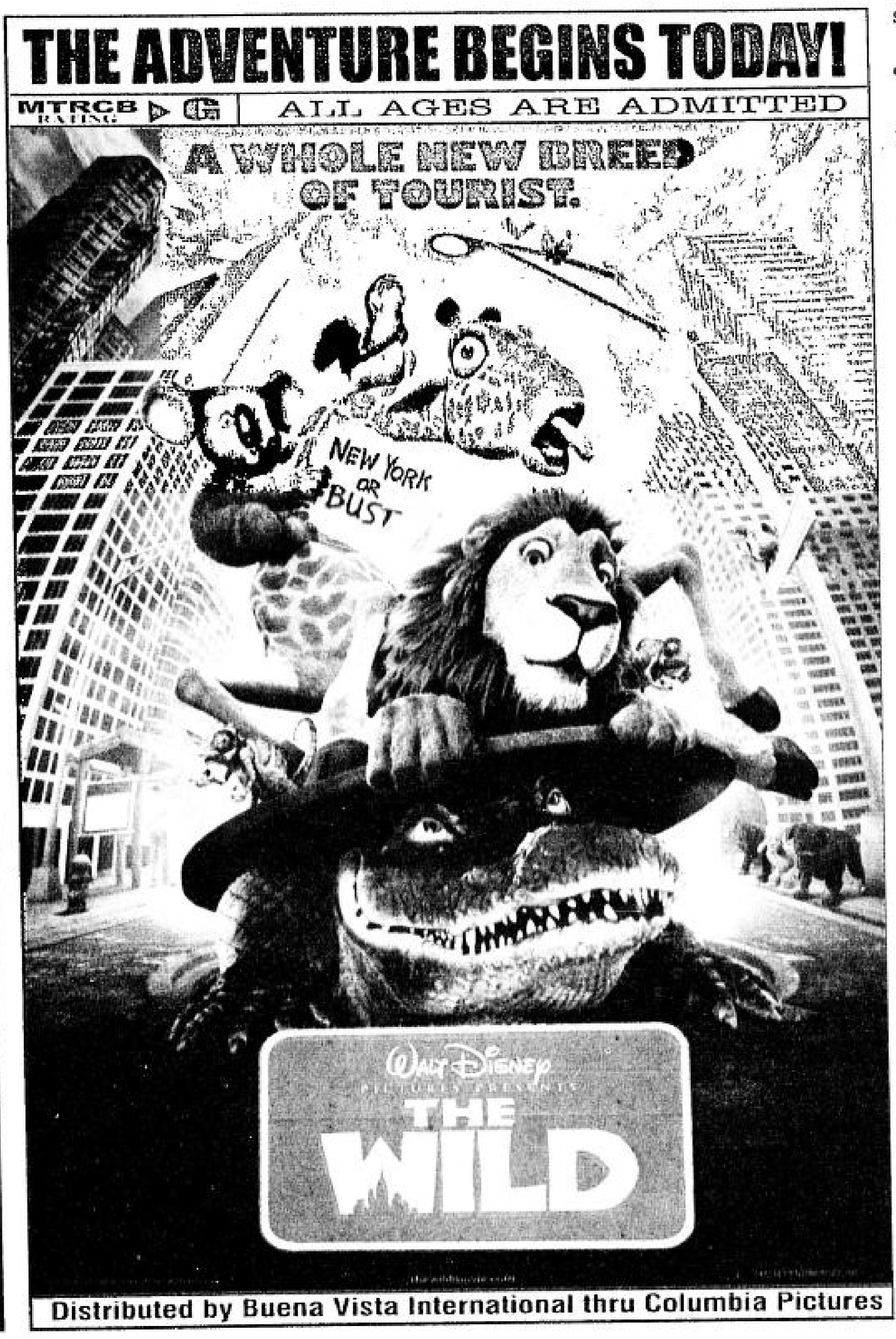

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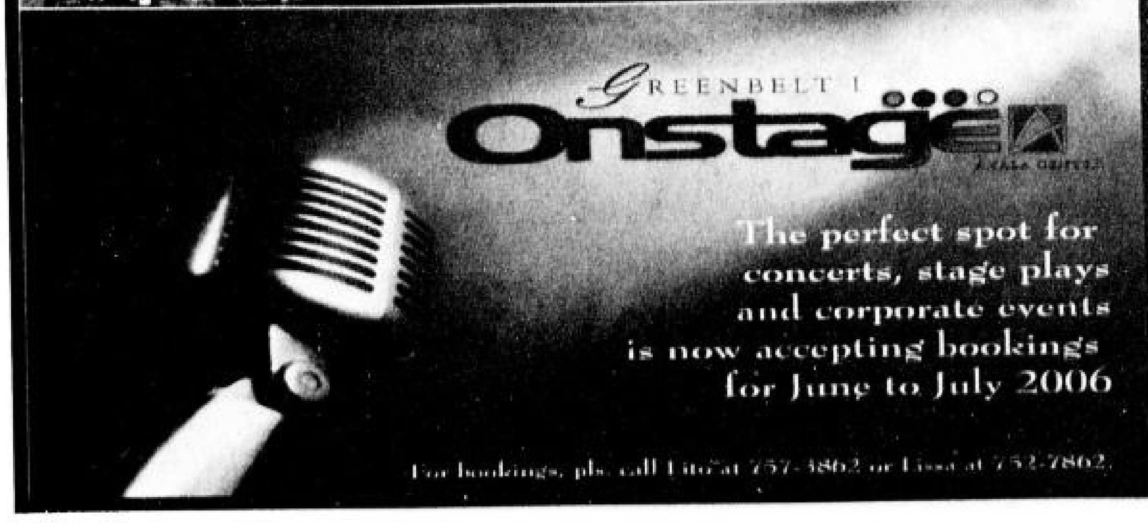

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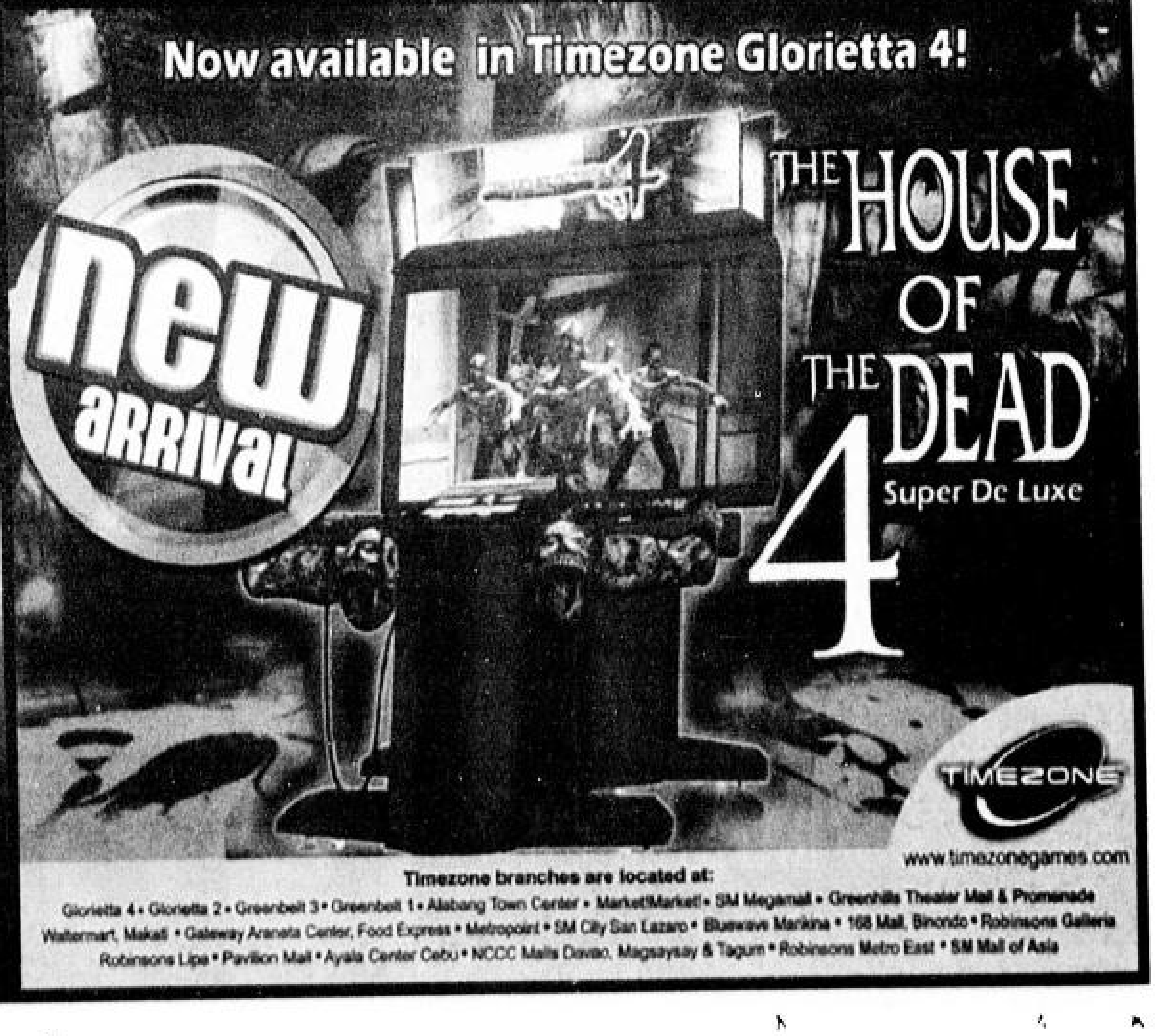

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Michael Douglas stars as Kiefer Sutherland in a big-screen clone of '24'

Silly plot, outlandish entanglements

LOS ANGELES—IN "THE SENTINEL," Michael Douglas stars as Kiefer Sutherland in a big-screen clone of "24," playing a federal agent caught up in a lurid tale of illicit passion, presidential assassination and an agent on the run. Special guest star: Kiefer Sutherland.

Adapted from the novel by former Secret Service agent Gerald Petievich, "The Sentinel" delivers modest action at best. A decent episode of Sutherland's "24" packs more and better action sequences in less than half the movie's running time.

The plot is silly, the characters are shallow, and one of the interpersonal entanglements—details of which we'll withhold for conspiracy buffs interested in catching the movie—is beyond outlandish.

Along with the story, the central characters and their relationships are cliched and contrived. Director Clark Johnson opens with footage of the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan, and we learn that Douglas' Secret Service agent Pete Garrison took a bullet that day protecting the president.

Sutherland plays David Breckinridge, a high-strung but methodical agent. Garrison recommends to protege Jill Marin (Eva Longoria) that she sign on to work with Breckinridge, an ace investigator.

REVIEW

Bad copy

Garrison's now a revered veteran assigned to protect the president's wife (Kim Basinger), an impossibly hot first lady despite her perpetually dour demeanor.

A snitch puts Garrison onto a plot to kill the president (David Rasche, whose cheery blandness suggests not so much the leader of the free world as a politely efficient K-Mart garden-supplies manager).

So big-screen "24" turns into bad copy of "The Fugitive" as Garrison goes on the lam, trying to prove his innocence while eluding an incompetent gaggle of SS agents.

"He is smarter than all of you," Breckinridge tells the goon squad pursuing Garrison. "You are chasing your worst nightmare." You'd never know that from the boring interplay Johnson and screenwriter George Nolfi concoct.

In her first major movie role, "Desperate Housewives" star Longoria looks great in her very chic fed attire. Beyond that, she barely registers, coming off as faint reflection of Jodie Foster in "The Silence of the Lambs."

The movie might have worked better if Douglas and Sutherland had swapped roles.

Douglas exudes a tightly wound efficacy that might have been more appropriate for Breckinridge.

And while Sutherland's not old enough to have taken a bullet for Reagan, it certainly would have livened up the movie to see him in the fugitive role, running off half-cocked like Jack Bauer. *AP*

'Tristan and Isolde' a tale as old as time

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

DESPITE DISCARDING the magical elements integral to the myths of the forbidden lovers Tristan and Isolde (or Iseult), the film translation works quite well in presenting the timeless tale that very likely inspired the classic love angles of the Arthurian legends and "Romeo and Juliet." "Tristan and Isolde" is more grounded in reality as a sword-and-sandal period piece, although one might wonder how it would've been had fantastical elements such as dragons, giants and love potions made it an effects-heavy sword-and-sorcery extravaganza.

REVIEW

But there are different permutations of the legend all over Europe, which allows for flexibility, anyway. Some of its core elements, such as the pair of ill-fated lovers—played by James Franco and Sophia Myles—are presented here as feasibly flawed but standard-issue mythological characters. Tristan, an orphaned British knight, and Isolde, daughter of cruel Irish King Donnchadh (David Patrick O'Hara), unexpectedly meet during the height of hostilities between their nations.

They hit it off speedily, ignoring the war in their secret seaside love nest. But both of them soon realize that the relationship is just a temporary arrangement. Their tale has all the trappings of the usual tragic romance; just add a series of political repercussions for good measure.

The misogynist King Donnchadh unhesitatingly raffles off Isolde to be the bride of the Brit baron who wins his suspicious invitational gladiatorial match. But this is just part of a fake truce to further divide the disorganized British tribes. Tristan, of course, wins on behalf of his adoptive father Marke (Rufus Sewell), unaware that Isolde was actually the Irish princess. But after Marke and Isolde's wedding, the pretty young things secretly keep in touch, in more ways than one.

Franco, while his barely-there accent falters from time to time, maintains his plucky presence, and is gallantry personified. The character Tristan doesn't stray too far from the imperfect hero mold, however, and the desperate but occasionally impish Isolde is extremely predictable. Yes, the gorgeous pairing can be dreadfully uninteresting at times, but the love triangle with the compassionate and painfully just Marke spices things up accordingly. Sewell makes a welcome dignified soul, surprisingly.

The project was supposed to have been directed by Ridley Scott, who ultimately opted to be co-executive producer instead. But Kevin Reynolds' competent direction, while less viscerally attuned and less focused on grand bloodbaths, works in emphasizing the emotional aspects of the story (penned by Dean Georgaris). There are better-told, better-looking and braver films about passion and betrayal, but "Tristan & Isolde" is at least likeable, accessible and quite sexy.

'PBB' teens 'artistahin' with glowing skin, lean bodies

From page A2-1

end at least three streets on the loop where a stage that evoked the interior of a warehouse—complete with a giant exhaust fan spinning in slow mo in the background—had been built in front of the ABS-CBN building on Eugenio Lopez Drive. A stone's throw away was the "PBB" house.

The opening number featured a dance performance by the top four housemates in the first season of PBB and the celebrity edition's top four.

First-batch housemates Nene, Jayson, Cass and Uma, and celebrity housemates Keanna, Zanjoe, John and Bianca danced to the tunes of "Pinoy Ako," the show's anthem, and "Sikat ang Pinoy," the celebrity edition's theme.

The band Itchyworms followed with their rendition of the teen edition theme, "Kabataang Pinoy."

Cue in host Mariel Rodriguez, who replaced Toni Gonzaga. Clad in tight black jeans with silver chains hanging from the belt hooks plus a backless black top, and made up with silver blue eye shadow, Mariel made her entrance on a motorbike.

Bianca, who will be doing "PBB Updates" and "Uplate" for the teen edition, was sweaty and still breathless from the dance number when she joined Mariel onstage for hosting chores.

The housemates then made a group entrance, riding pillion on motorbikes, faces hidden under helmets.

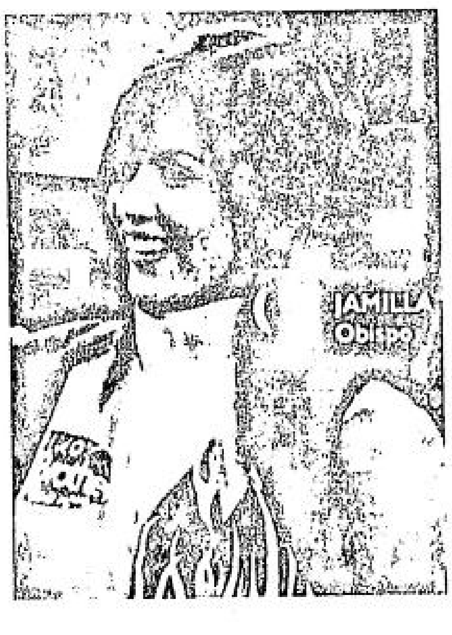
And what beautiful faces they turned out to be! The housemates are all *artistahin*, or movie-star material, as they say.

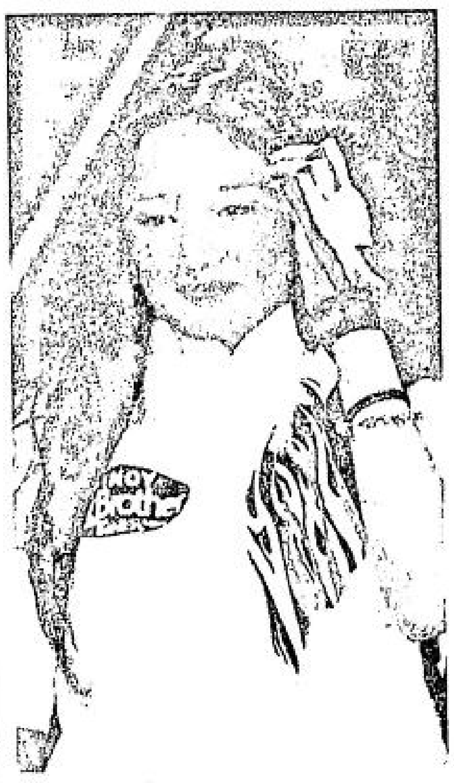
When the helmets were discarded for the great reveal, there were no zits in sight, no sweat rings under the armpits, no hair out of place—only perfect teeth and perfect smiles, glowing skin, lean bodies and youthful exuberance.

The teen housemates are, in order of their appearance on stage: Gerald Anderson and Niòa Atienza, Michael Lee and Kim Chiu, Bam Romana and Olyn Membian, Fred Payawan and Claredes Cabiguin, Aldred Gatchalian and Mikki Arceo, Matthew Evans and Jamilla Obispo.

FRED Payawan PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

CLARE
Cabiguin





NINA Atienza

After six of the housemates were introduced, the show gave way to a showdown between ex-celebrity housemate Budoy and his band Jr Kilat and Brownman Revival. They two bands traded songs, whipping the live audience into fever-pitch excitement.

The finale was another showdown among the band Sandwich, Kevin Roy and Cookie Chua, who dished out a series of youth-empowerment songs.

Unlike in the two previous "PBB" shows, the teen housemates were brought to the Big Brother's house in pairs.

The live introduction of the housemates was preceded by a video clips enhanced by Mangga-like anime characters that sought to define each one's character. For example, a princess-like character was used to establish what would seem to be the fairy-tale life of Assumptionista Niòa Atienza, and a sword represented the discipline-driven lifestyle of Fred Payawan, an officer in his school's (Colegio de San Agustin) military training corps.

Not all the housemates are as privileged as Fred and Niòa, and Michael Lee, an honor student at the Ateneo de Manila. Most of them are teens on the edge, some from broken homes.

Matthew Evans is searching for the American father he has never met. Jamilla Obispo, 18, is an unwed mother who needs to have her child operated on for a cleft palate.

After the show, "PBB" director Lauren Dyogi predicted that a male housemate would be this edition's winner.

Asked how he picked out 12 out of 30,000 hopefuls who auditioned, Dyogi said he had considered character before looks.

"This show is all about life and how real people live it amidst tasks and challenges," he explained. "This batch just happens to be beautiful, too."

The top teen will receive P1 million in cash, a condo unit, a computer livelihood package, a grand tour of four local tourist destinations, and the chance to become the next show biz teen idol.

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2004 National Shoppers' Choice Awards

Imports up 4.6% in February to $3.36B

GLOBE SUPPORTS LUMAD COMMUNITIES
Globe Telecom recently gathered representatives from Lumad communities in Davao City for a livelihood program on farming and vegetable processing. In photo are (from left): Datu Luis Lambac, Datu George Mandahay, Datu Ruben Labawan, Datu Arthur Ali, Datu Joel Unad, and Globe CEO Gerardo Ablaza Jr.

Increase traced to high oil prices

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S IMPORTS ROSE 4.6 PERCENT to $3.36 billion in February, reversing the decline during the same period last year, but economists said the growth was accounted largely by the increase in oil prices rather than a pick-up in economic activity.

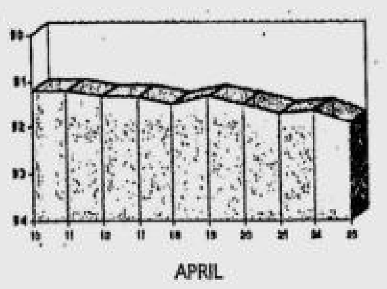
Imports of electronics, which are mainly raw materials for finished products intended for exports, declined 1.1 percent year-on-year to $1.61 billion. Electronics accounted for 48 percent of the total import bill for the month.

"We normally use data on imports (especially of capital goods and electronics) as a signal

IMPORTS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 51.90 = $

As of 5 p.m., April 25, 2006

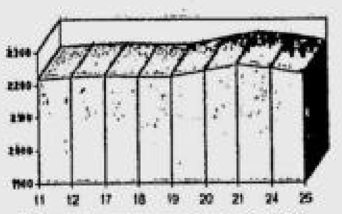
¥ 114.50 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., April 25, 2006

GOLD: $625.40-625.90

per ounce Hong Kong, April 25, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stocks down on oil fears

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.8-PERCENT LOWer yesterday on profit-taking sparked by concerns that soaring oil prices would force the government to suspend a key sales tax on

STOCKS/ B4

WHAT'S INSIDE

Winston: BDO is the 'drunken' buyer /B3

Gov't to buy back Brady bonds /B4

Meralco cuts first-quarter loss to ₱748M

By Abigail L. Ho

DRIVEN BY GROWTH IN ELECTRICITY sales, the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. cut its first-quarter net loss to P748 million from P2.2 billion in the same period last year.

Revenues jumped 14.2 percent to P41.6 billion from close to P36.5 billion in the first three months of 2005 as electricity volume increased 4.2 percent.

In a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the distribution utility said it would have generated a net income of P179 million at the close of the first quarter had it not been for the P1.4-billion provision it booked for probable losses stemming from a pending Supreme Court decision.

The high tribunal upheld a Court of Appeals ruling nullifying the Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of Meralco's unbundled rates.

This also effectively nullified an ERC-approved rate increase of 17 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

Meralco earlier said that every month until the issuance of the final decision, it would be providing at least P500 million, exclusive of the 32-percent tax shield, for losses that an unfavorable decision could bring.

For 2005, Meralco booked a P5.9-billion provision for probable losses, causing it to suffer a a net loss of P411 million despite a 14.9-percent revenue increase.

In the first three months of the year, Meralco managed to grow power sales by 4.2 percent to 5,824 gigawatt-hours (GWh), driven mostly by increases in one-day power sales to the industrial sector, and increased demand during the hot summer months.

As with the past quarters, the commercial sector led overall growth, with volume increasing by 6 percent in the January-March period.

Power demand from the transport sub-segment rose 30.4 percent, fueled by the increasing ridership of the Light Rail Transit lines 1 and 2 and the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3.

The full operation of five new SM malls caused demand from the retail trade sub-segment to jump by 25.1 percent.

The continued proliferation of

MERALCO/ B2

The Winning Element at Harte-Hanks

Texan Contact Center Opens New PLDT-Enabled Facility

For the recently opened 400-plus seat Harte-Hanks Philippine contact center, this was just the beginning. Riding on the most stable bedrock of PLDT telecommunications infrastructure, this leading worldwide direct-marketing firm also plans to launch more than 600 seats in the future.

"The Harte-Hanks expansion is scheduled to take place later this year, in August or September," said Jason Cavo, Harte-Hanks' Managing Director in Manila. The future growth will be driven by existing customers, focused on gaming and internet security, along with new business in the B2B and B2C spaces. As Cavo puts it, "Common reasons customers call our contact center include new hardware setup and technical troubleshooting, which are driven by the success of our clients' marketing and sales initiatives."

With the growing popularity of online gaming, new hardware releases, as well as other related high technology products and services, customer servicing needs are seen to increase substantially over the next few months.

Empowered Harte-Hanks contact center agents assist in simple step-by-step set-up procedures and can even directly access customer file registries for clean-up and maintenance.

Harte-Hanks describes itself as a "world-wide, direct and targeted marketing company that provides direct marketing services and shopper advertising opportunities to a wide range of local, regional, national, and international consumer and business-to-business markets."

The San Antonio, Texas-based firm which traces its roots to newspaper publishing now delivers focused marketing opportunities as well as Customer Relations Management solutions including call centers.

Their Philippine facility located at Market! Market! Mall in Taguig is just the latest in their growing International division. They also have operations in Shanghai, and Australia among others.

"One of the main reasons we chose the Philippines is the quality of the workforce," said Harte-Hanks Senior Vice President and Corporate Officer David Skidmore, "In our opinion, they ensure more competent customer handling better than other low-cost markets."

Considering its plans to further expand the customer service center in the near future, Harte-Hanks is prepared to equip its personnel with a telecommunications network that will cater to the large and fast-approaching influx of local and international service calls with ease. This is where PLDT comes in.

With PLDT's top of the line infrastructure and customized business solutions, Harte-Hanks should continue to progress effortlessly into the future. "Large contact centers are very dynamic work environments and the appropriate technology is needed for them to be able to flourish. Our goal is to provide Harte-Hanks with a telecommunications network that will be able to evolve at the same pace as they do and retain the excellent quality of service", says Jovy Hernandez, PLDT Sales Business Head.

> **"One of the main reasons we chose the Philippines is the quality of the workforce,"**

"Competent customer handling entails being flexible enough to meet the increasing number of customers and the new demands they bring with them," adds PLDT Senior Relationship Manager Jeff Mendoza, "We are tailoring the network and business solutions of Harte-Hanks to adapt to its plan of continued development without compromising quality." PLDT has made it clear that they are going to be with the corporation every step of the way, as it continues to make an impression on the world of marketing.

"At PLDT, we always make it a point to provide responsive solutions to corporate clients at every step of their development, from startup to expansion and beyond," said PLDT SVP and Head for Corporate Business Group, Eric R. Alberto. "Innovation is a cornerstone strategy in our business; more remarkably, its pace is encouragingly gaining momentum with new technologies."

This cooperation between a multinational marketing company and the leading telecommunications provider is just the beginning of a successful and long-lasting relationship. The future has a lot in store for Harte-Hanks, and they are equipped to meet it head-on and roll with the punches, with absolutely no worries at all.

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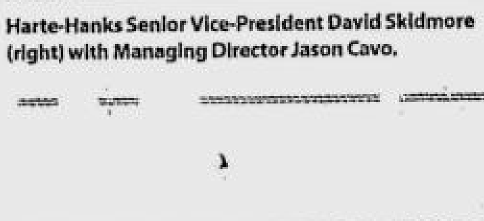
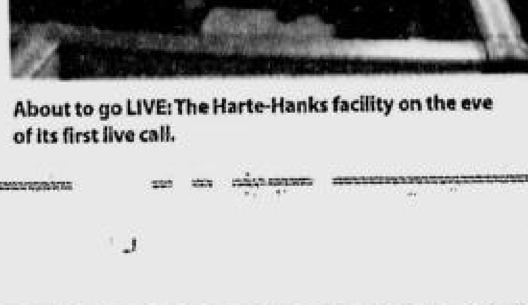
PLDT Sales Business Head Jovy Hernandez with PLDT SVP and Head for Corporate Business Group Eric R. Alberto, Harte-Hanks Managing Director Jason Cavo and Harte-Hanks Director of Operations Banjamin Chacko; at extreme right, PLDT Senior Relationship Manager Jeff Mendoza.



Harte-Hanks Senior Vice-President David Skidmore (right) with Managing Director Jason Cavo.



About to go LIVE: The Harte-Hanks facility on the eve of its first live call.

Advt

Customs reforms urged to plug collection leakages

Solon says importers seek ports with lowest tax rates

By Doris C. Dumlao

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE COUNTRY's most senior House representative has called for urgent action to plug collection leakages in the Bureau of Customs caused by widespread "forum-shopping" for ports where importers could get away with the lowest duties and taxes.

Rep. Herminio Teves (3rd district, Negros Oriental) told visiting business reporters the discretionary powers vested on Customs collectors had opened up arbitrage opportunities for importers to flock to the ports where the collectors were perceived to be the most lenient.

Teves, whose son Margarito is finance secretary, launched a new book, "Ways and Means for Tax Collection Efficiency," on his 86th birthday celebration here. Asked which among his proposals could be immediately implemented to shore up government revenues, he said it would be to correct systemic errors in Customs.

"Do you know that every Customs collector is a kingdom by himself? Nobody interferes with him, how he will charge duties, how much he will charge for VAT (value-added tax). Whatever decision the collector does, it goes," Teves told reporters.

"There's a system now of forum-shopping. One importer will go from one port to another and ask the collectors and look for the cheapest," he said.

Teves said the system was not exactly illegal but was a gray area indisputably detrimental to the government's fiscal consolidation efforts.

Teves noted that the Customs recently uncovered a big case where the imported shipment was brought to Manila, then to Cebu and even Cagayan de Oro but was finally unloaded in Batangas because it was cheapest to do so in that port.

"Why are the ports competing with each other? One importer could go to either port depending on the arrangement," he said.

Teves has called for the creation of an agency that would identify the type of taxes and duties on a standard basis.

Meralco cuts first-quarter …

From page B1

call centers and other business process outsourcing (BPO)-related activities resulted in a 2.8-percent demand growth from the real estate sector.

The industrial sector also registered a 5.4-percent growth in the first quarter, led by the paper manufacturing, plastics manufacturing and electrical machinery sub-sectors.

Residential sales also managed a 1.3-percent growth after several months of volume declines.

Imports …

From page B1

whether the economy is doing all right. But in this case, high oil prices are what mainly drove the growth in imports," said Victor Abola, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Benchmark Dubai crude averaged at $57.61 a barrel in February, reflecting a 44-percent jump from the $39.87 in the same month a year ago.

According to the National Statistics Office, top imports aside from electronics were: mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, which amounted to $524.83 million in February; industrial machinery and equipment, $138.85 million; transport equipment, $135.34 million; cereals and cereal preparations, $88.94 million, and telecommunication equipment and electrical machinery, $58.34 million.

The United States was the Philippines' biggest source of imports, accounting for $573.56 million of the total import bill for February. Other major sources of imports were Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, China, Saudi Arabia, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, the NSO said.

With exports earlier reported to have reached $3.44 billion in February, the country's balance of trade for the month posted a surplus of $88 million, the first monthly surplus recorded since December 2004.

Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said that a trade surplus was a welcome development, but admitted that a one-month surplus had no significant bearing yet on the economy.

"The trend is still not very clear and exports need to grow more vigorously," he said.

Exports in February actually represented a 14.8-percent year-on-year growth, higher than the government's full-year target of 8 percent.

Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for policy and planning, earlier said the healthy growth in exports in February raised hopes that the country would recover this year from the slowdown in global demand for electronics last year.

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	GROWING YOUR BUSINESS
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May 18 Thursday **Amor Santiago** Twenty plus years of senior HR practice. Master in Business Administration, DLSU MA cand Asian Studies, UP	**Personal Touch: Effective Human Resource Management for SMEs** Grow the business and minimize the fuss. Put together a healthy and productive organization. Improve your ability to manage your human resource effectively and feel its effect on the bottomline!
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May 24 Wed & 26 Fri Afternoons **Chito Tanchoco**	**Managing Your Logistics** Don't get wrong-footed by increasingly complex requirements in your business. Do you have issues with transportation and handling of finished goods? Understand scheduling, routing selection and unit load handling!
May 29 Monday **Ma. Nanette A. Blason** Senior Manager – Corporate Banking Special Lending Group, BPI	**Cutting a Deal: Financing and Funding Sources for Your Business** Ready and set but can't go? Use financial institutions to raise capital for your growing company. Orders up to here but can't buy the materials? What do you do? Talk to your friendly and helpful banker!
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June 1 Thursday **Ricky Mercado & Team** Professorial Lecturer, Leadership and Strategy Dept. ADMU Diploma in Family Therapy and Dynamics, Ateneo Master in Business Administration, Ateneo Graduate School of Business	**Strategic Planning and Professionalizing the Business** As businesses grow in size and complexity, the family needs to sort out the relationship between the family tree and the organizational chart! Learn about strategies for professionalizing family businesses.
June 2 Friday **Ricky Mercado & Team**	**Crafting Your Family Constitution** This encapsulates the founder's beliefs and ideals. Carve it in stone! This is the road map that provides the guidance for the subsequent generations to follow!

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Winston: BDO is the 'drunken' buyer

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IN A BIZARRE TWIST, WINSTON GARCIA, GSIS president and Equitable PCIBank vice chair, has revealed that the "drunken" buyer offering to acquire Equitable PCIBank at P95 a share is none other than Banco de Oro itself.

An indignant Garcia made the disclosure to the Securities and Exchange Commission in answer to the SEC demand that Garcia reveal the identity of his buyer(s) for the Equitable PCIBank.

"Banco de Oro, a publicly listed company, secretly tendered a formal offer to GSIS to acquire its entire shareholdings in EPCIB at P92 per share a few weeks before its public offer to merge EPCIB" at P56 a share, Garcia wrote. "This offer was subsequently increased to P95."

As proof, Garcia attached a copy of an e-mail purportedly sent by Banco de Oro president Nestor Tan.

"Winston: Based on our discussion, I have drafted a Term Sheet for the share-swap transaction. Please let me know if this is what you are looking for. I can then discuss it with the Sy Family. Regards, Nestor," said the e-mail from nvtbdo@bdo.com.ph.

Copies of Garcia's letter, along with the alleged BDO e-mail, were distributed during yesterday's stormy Equitable PCIBank board meeting.

Apparently because of the boardroom stress, where board meetings are now allegedly punctuated by high-pitched exchanges, corporate secretary Luis Ma. Uranza tendered his resignation yesterday.

Winston-Tessie meetings

WINSTON Garcia and Teresita Sy have held at least two secret meetings in Hong Kong to discuss the Equitable PCIBank sale, with no less than First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and his golf mate/stockbroker Vivian Yuchengco as a member of the entourage of the first meeting, according to the pro-Garcia grapevine.

The first such meeting was held Dec. 19 at the Peninsula, where Arroyo, Yuchengco, DBP chair Reynaldo David and Sy treated the victorious Philippine Southeast Asian Games athletes to dinner.

David confirmed the treat and the dinner, but said that he never saw Garcia in Hong Kong at that time.

The second supposed meeting was held at the Marriott on March 25—incidentally, that was the same weekend Garcia called up Cocktales, saying he was in Hong Kong to finalize details with his mysterious ("drunken," according to one senior banker) buyer—where the SM heiress allegedly improved her P92 a share, SM Prime Holdings share-swap offer to P95 a share, cash.

Earlier, in February, Garcia allegedly also met with Henry Sy Jr. at the Westin Philippine Plaza to help persuade his elder sister to give in and sell the SM-BDO stake to Garcia and his mystery buyer.

"If these accounts were correct, both GSIS and SM-BDO were willing to sell out to each other for P95 a share, considerably more than the P56 a share that SM-BDO was offering in the proposed 'merger of equals' with Equitable PCIBank," said Equitable PCIBank fellow vice chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez.

"I am stunned by the price discrepancy."

Ayala shoots down BCDA plan

A PLAN by the government's Bases Conversion Development Authority to decongest McKinley Road by opening up the Pasay Road end of Dasmariñas Village and linking it with The Fort has been shot down by the Ayalas.

Ayala Land sent a statement to say that neither their company nor their affiliate, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., "nor any of its officers," is behind such initiative.

The statement, a reaction to a Monday item in this column, also branded as "incorrect" a claim that the Ayalas, in reference to the Zobel de Ayala family, were said to be supportive of the plan.

The planned road, which is outside of the Ayala-controlled district in The Fort, is part of the BCDA master plan for the 440-hectare former military base developed in the 1990s under then chair Rogelio Singson.

The proposed road link would benefit the Dasmariñas homeowners who would escape the gridlock on McKinley Road by providing them with an alternative route to The Fort, said BCDA executive vice president Isaac Puno III.

The proposed road link would be a limited-access road for Dasma residents, Puno said, adding that the funding for the project had already been allocated by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

According to the grapevine, the Philippine Army brass is supportive of the plan since the planned road would also fork off toward Pasong Tamo and provide an alternative route for the Army housing complex being developed by the Consunjis of DMCI.

As well, Taguig Mayor Freddie Tinga is said to be in favor of the new road since it would also connect with Lawton Parkway and Commando Link Road, and provide an alternative access route to the proposed SEC and DTI office complex.

In explaining their opposition to the planned road link, Ayala Land said: "Our efforts are directed toward ensuring that the seven entrances to the FBDC properties in our

COCKTALES/ B4

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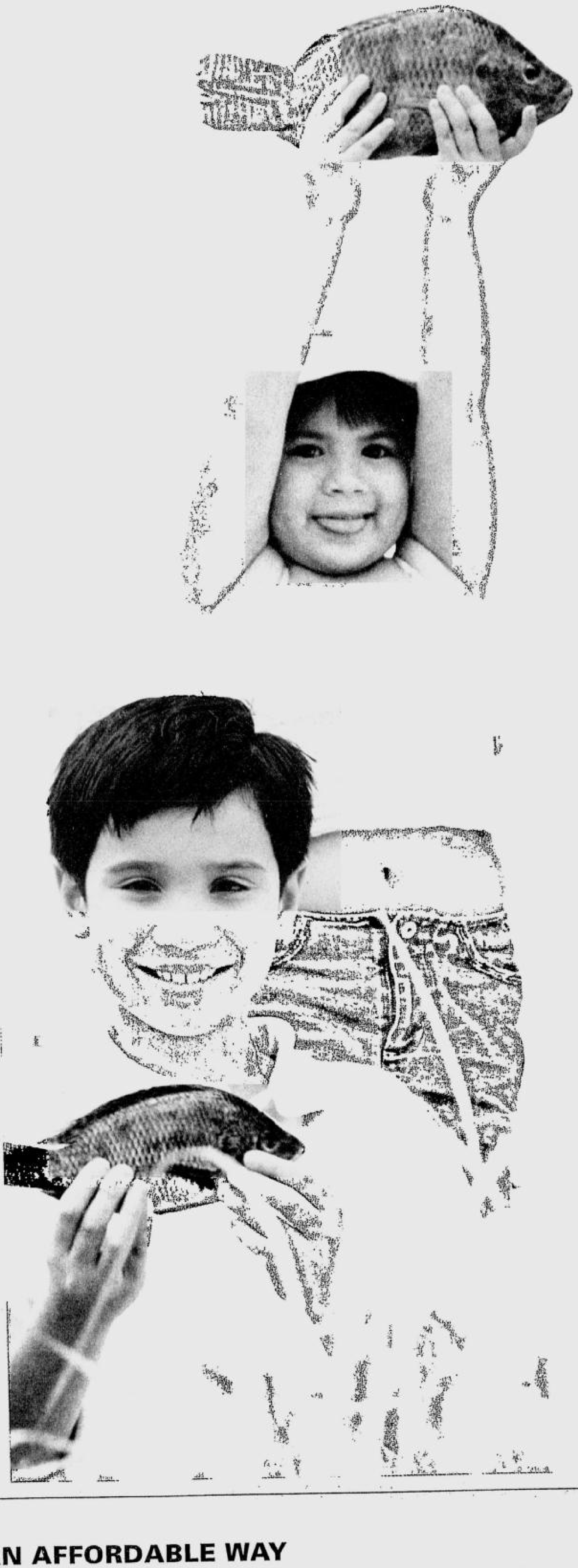

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Gov't to buy back Brady bonds

Cutting foreign debts by $411M

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO redeem in June some $411 worth of Brady bonds, which were supposed to mature in 2017, saying the move was consistent with the goal of trimming down its debts.

"This is a debt and liability management strategy," said National Treasurer Omar Cruz.

Cruz explained that a reduction of the government's existing foreign liabilities by $411 million would help improve the country's credit image.

He said the government's high level of liquidity and improving would enable it to redeem the Brady bonds, which were dollar-denominated instruments issued in the United States by the Philippines in 1992.

The bonds have an annual interest rate of 6.5 percent. However, the government would pay only an interest rate of 3.25 percent on the $411 million worth of bonds since they would be redeemed in June this year.

The bonds contain a call provision that gives the Philippine government the right to retire the bonds as long as the bondholders receive at least 30 days notice.

The $411 million worth of bonds represent 53 percent of the $774 million worth of the total outstanding Brady bonds held by the government.

Earlier, the government had retired $1.58 billion of its total Brady Bonds holdings worth $3.348 billion.

Fiscal authorities said the redemption of the bonds would lead to the release of some $256 million worth of collateral, which could be immediately turned into cash. The collateral is composed of zero coupon US treasuries and other assets.

Cruz said the decision to exercise the call option, or the option to buy back the bonds prior to maturity, was in line with the government's fiscal policy of reducing its dependence on foreign-denominated debts and rely more on domestic sources of credit.

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leaves the Philippine Stock Exchange in Makati City after gracing the bell-ringing ceremony to start the trading of new shares offered by Megaworld Corp. and the signing the Special Purpose Vehicle Act bill. The President is accompanied by (from left to right) PSE Chair Jose Vitug ,Trade Secretary Peter Favila and PSE president Francis Lim .

PLYN RILLON

BDO denies making formal offer to GSIS

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BANCO DE ORO UNIVERSAL BANK of the Sy family yesterday denied it had made a formal offer to buy the Government Service Insurance System's 12.5-percent stake in Equitable PCI Bank.

"We clarify that BDO has not tendered any formal offer to purchase the share holdings of GSIS in EPCIB whether at P92 or P95 per share before BDO made its offer of a merger of equals with EPCIB," Elmer Serrano, BDO corporate information officer told the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) in a disclosure.

Serrano also said BDO had "likewise not received any formal offer to buy its own shares in EPCIB at the said price range."

The disclosure was made after GSIS chief legal counsel Leighton Siazon revealed in a letter to the Securities and Exchange Commission on Monday that BDO secretly tendered a formal offer to acquire the GSIS' entire holdings in EPCIB at P92 a few weeks before its offer to merge with EPCIB. This offer was said to have been increased later to P95.

In the same letter, Siazon said BDO deliberately omitted to disclose to the public , to the PSE and to the SEC that barely five weeks before its offer to buy EPCIB, it confidentially offered to buy the entire stake of the GSIS in EPCIB at P92. On Nov. 29, BDO president Nestor Tan submitted a formal offer to GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia to buy the latter's EPCIB shares at P92 per share. A copy of Tan's e-mail with an attached term sheet was submitted to the SEC.

Siazon also claimed that BDO, through its chair and Teresita Sy, later improved the offer to P95 per share payable in two years.

In a statement, the SM group issued a similar denial while admitting that the BDO president really sent the GSIS an e-mail on Nov. 29.

SM group legal counsel Florentino M. Herrera III said the e-mail of Tan to the GSIS contained a drafted term sheet for a five-year share swap and that this was "based on discussions made by Tan with Garcia."

He added that Tan made it clear in the same e-mail message that "this is still subject to discussions with the Sy family."

In the e-mail, Tan had added, "please let me know if this is what you are looking for. I can then discuss it with the Sy family."

"There is absolutely nothing, even by any stretch of imagination, to conclude (anything) from the e-mailed talking points (or) draft sent to Garcia (or) any suggestion of a firm offer to acquire the GSIS-held EPCIB stock," Herrera said in the statment.

However, this five-year share swap draft proposal was rejected by the GSIS, Herrera said.

When the draft was rejected by the GSIS last year, BDO said it "made the next move" last Jan. 9 , announcing a proposal for a merger between BDO and EPCIB.

Herrera expressed regrets that the core issue in the letter of the SEC to the GSIS, which is for the GSIS to name its unknown buyer, has been sent to the back burner.

"It appears that the long dead and rejected e-mailed draft letter of Tan to Garcia has been put to use as a distraction and diversion," SM's legal counsel said.

PSBank Q1 profit up 203%

PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK, THE COUNTRY'S second biggest thrift bank, said its net income in the first quarter soared 203 percent to P356.6 million from P117.5 million in the same period last year.

This was attributed largely to trading gains, bank president Pascual M. Garcia III said in a briefing yesterday.

Net interest income in the first quarter rose 5.2 percent to P613 million while incomes from fee-based services and the sale of repossessed properties more than tripled to P646 million from P147 million.

For the entire year, the bank expects to grow its net income to P813 million from P646.4 million in 2005.

Consumer loan growth in the first quarter was placed at between 14 and 16 percent. Further loan growth is expected to come from families of overseas Filipino workers as they avail themselves of more vehicle and housing loans.

PS Bank's total assets improved 13 percent , the bulk of which came from customer loans which climbed to P29.4 billion from P27 billion. Total deposits also rose 7.9 percent to P46.1 billion.

Total liabilities rose to P46.13 billion as of the first quarter, partly as a result of the completion of the bank's P2 billion Tier 2 unsecured subordinated debt.

The bank is also set to list on the stock exchange 22.4 million shares at P33.50 apiece on May 4 which has raised P751 million in new capital for the bank from a stock rights offer completed last Friday.

Stocks down ...

From page B1

petroleum products, dealers said.

Suspending the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) on fuel would ease pressure on pump prices and inflation generally but it would also mean lower revenues for the government, which is struggling to control its budget deficit.

A recent improvement in the government's finances has been the main reason for the pick-up in the stock market of late but further progress could be put in doubt by the soaring import bill for oil.

The composite index lost 17.93 points to 2,232.55 after trading between 2,225.42 and 2,250.52. Volume was 3.29 billion shares worth P2.82 billion.

The broader all-shares index fell 6.10 points to 1,099.33 with all sub-indices ending in the red.

Losers outnumbered gainers 80 to 21, with 46 stocks unchanged.

Some officials have been calling for the suspension of the sales tax on oil products to alleviate the effects of rising crude prices.

"Investors got jittery over the possible suspension of the VAT on petroleum," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

"This is not a good alternative. We should remember that the reason for the market's exemplary performance (earlier) is because of the government's determination to carry out fiscal reforms," he said. *AFP*

RP eyes credit-rating upgrade from Japan firm

JAPAN CREDIT RATING AGENCY LTD. (JCRA), which guides Japanese businessmen in their investment decisions, said it had revised its outlook on Philippine debts from "negative" to "stable" on account of the implementation of the VAT Reform Law and the perceived improvement in the political environment.

A "stable" outlook boosts the country's chances of getting a credit ratings upgrade from the Japanese agency.

Currently, JCRA assigns a BBB- (triple B minus) to both the country's domestic and foreign currency long-term senior debts.

In a statement, JCRA said the Arroyo administration had survived a "critical situation," with the impeachment charges against the President already rejected and the Supreme Court ruling validating the constitutionality of the VAT law.

The VAT Reform Law expanded the coverage of the value-added tax since last November and increased the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent starting February. The law is expected to generate for the government P75 billion in additional revenue.

The Japanese credit rating agency acknowledged the coup threats which forced President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to temporarily declare a state of emergency last Feb. 24. It, however, stressed that the administration was able to avert the possible political crisis as the state of emergency was lifted a week after.

"Political uncertainty may persist as long as there remains the mechanism of anti-government forces taking advantage of dissatisfied elements in the military," JCRA said.

It said, however, that for a coup plot to succeed, anti-government forces should have a strong personality as a leader and that military actions should be supported by the public.

"These conditions are less likely to be met at the present," it said. *Michelle V. Remo*

Cocktales

From page B3

current plan are as well-designed and efficiently operated as possible."

Heard through the grapevine

IF YOU want to see and meet Supreme Court justices literally disrobed, you have better chances of bumping into and talking to them in the Manila Golf Club locker room rather than in Padre Faura.

Last Saturday, top corporate lawyer Alfonso "Boy" Reyno hosted a private golf game for select Supreme Court justices, after earlier hosting a welcome party for a new justice.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 25, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	48,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35.5	35	35.5	2,378,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	61.5	61.5	14,141,200
China Banking Corp.	800	800	800	800	800
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.41	0.44	25,900,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	70.5	71	70	70	10,900
International Exch. Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	120,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	38.5	38	39	2,771,200
Phil. Bank OF Comm. A	52	52	52	52	400
Philippine National Bank	34.5	34.5	34	34	39,700
Phil. Savings Bank	37	39	37	39	5,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	31,500
Security Bank Corp.	47	47	46	46	43,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	38	38.5	38	38.5	2,200
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Abacus Financial	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.48	300,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	28	29	28	29	6,600
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	185	190	185	190	800
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2160	2150	2160	1,430
Ivantage Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.06	8,675,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44.5	45	242,800
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	44.5	44.5	44	44	75,600
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13	13	13	6,200
Manila Electric Co. B	19.25	19.25	19	19.25	476,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	1,341,000
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.3	9,495,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.02	1.02	0.98	1	363,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	10,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21	21.25	21	21.25	181,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36	35.5	35.5	213,600
Pancake House Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	20,000
RFM Corp.	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.74	120,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3	3.15	3	3.05	2,519,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	40,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	68,600
San Miguel Corp. B	80.5	80.5	80	80.5	76,000
Universal Robina Corp.	21	21	20.5	20.5	1,481,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	120,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	4,670,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.48	3,948,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	2,000,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	700,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	70,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	2,000,000
Ayala Corp.	355	355	350	350	146,850
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.52	200,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	854,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.65	67,251,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	200,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	22,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.94	390,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	50,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	1,420,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	7,275,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.95	3.05	2.95	3	2,951,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	273,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	395,000
Medco Holdings	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	830,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	600,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.2	1.14	1.2	11,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	200,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	5,870,000
SM Investments Corp.	228	230	227	228	121,180
South China Resources Inc.	0.88	0.89	0.87	0.88	570,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	2,500,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	2,480,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	3,727,400
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	10,000
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.22	1.14	1.18	9,653,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2,600,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.94	1.94	367,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.72	1.76	1.72	1.72	41,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	160,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	430,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.67	24,850,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	60,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.38	11,338,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	200,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3	3	3	3	50,000
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	11,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	3,870,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	750,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.46	75,329,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	24,690,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	1,090,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	200,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	9.5	9.6	9.3	9.5	455,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	8,720,000
SM Development Corp.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.68	1,208,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.7	4,361,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,660,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.5	7,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.96	1	0.96	1	7,400,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	865	875	865	870	36,430
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	2,869,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1970	1985	1970	1985	337,760
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	500,000
Ionics Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	27,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	200,000
Philweb Corp.	0.026	0.027	0.025	0.027	213,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	15,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	23,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12	12.25	12	12	2,082,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.95	0.97	0.95	0.97	160,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	307,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	11,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	360,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	11,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.54	640,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	660	660	660	660	3,340
Ipeople Inc.	3.35	3.5	3.35	3.35	379,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.04	1.92	2.02	607,000
Paxys Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.2	9.4	785,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	2.55	2.65	2.42	2.6	10,545,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2.65	2.7	2.48	2.55	7,594,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	202,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.4	7.4	7	7.4	984,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.5	142,400
Benguet Corp. B	33	33	33	33	1,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	60,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.36	58,080,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.38	0.39	0.36	0.38	27,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.022	0.024	557,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.028	0.026.	0.027	251,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	1,338,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4	4	3.85	4	7,339,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4	4	3.85	4	9,712,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	30	30	29	29.5	134,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	1,220,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.45	120,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	5,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	80,600,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	69,300,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.91	0.91	0.83	0.87	1,790,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.89	0.89	0.86	0.88	1,130,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	7	7.4	6.7	7.3	1,247,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13	12.75	12.75	749,500

CURRENCIES

April 25, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.806322	1.000000	51.6660
Japan	Yen	0.007045	0.008737	0.4514
United Kingdom	Pound	1.442912	1.789500	92.4563
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104000	0.128981	6.6639
Switzerland	Franc	0.636654	0.789578	40.7943
Canada	Dollar	0.709665	0.880127	45.4726
Singapore	Dollar	0.508336	0.630438	32.5722
Australia	Dollar	0.599808	0.743882	38.4334
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.139011	2.652801	137.0596
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.214985	0.266624	13.7754
Brunei	Dollar	0.506738	0.628457	32.4699
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000113	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.021468	0.026624	1.3756
UAE	Dirham	0.219539	0.272272	14.0672
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.240200	64.0762
Argentina	Peso	0.264108	0.327547	16.9230
Brazil	Real	0.380161	0.471476	24.3593
Denmark	Kroner	0.134063	0.166265	8.5902
India	Rupee	0.017975	0.022292	1.1517
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.221061	0.274160	14.1648
Mexico	New Peso	0.072767	0.090246	4.6626
New Zealand	Dollar	0.508720	0.630915	32.5969
Norway	Kroner	0.127209	0.157764	8.1510
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013448	0.016678	0.8617
South Africa	Rand	0.133024	0.164976	8.5237
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.001064	0.0550
Sweden	Kroner	0.107100	0.132825	6.8625
Syria	Pound	0.015533	0.019264	0.9953
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025212	0.031268	1.6155
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000376	0.000466	0.0241

Hikes in steel prices seen; costs up 30%

Supply squeeze, rising demand blamed for rise

By Ronnel W. Domingo

STEEL INDUSTRY PLAYERS YESTERDAY warned of impending hikes in the prices of steel products due to the tight global supply and rising cost of raw materials in the world market.

Wellington Y. Tong, president of the Philippine Iron and Steel Industry, said in a briefing that the cost of reinforcing bars or billets, cold-rolled coils and steel slabs have gone up by between 30 percent and 35 percent.

"The local industry is very import dependent and a rise in international prices can only mean (a parallel move) in local prices," Tong said.

He said the continued uptrend in prices was due to "pockets of areas with acute supply shortage" resulting from an accident in Brazil and production cutbacks in Europe as well as Asia.

Tong added that local prices could go up because of the industry's dependence on energy and transportation, the costs of which are likewise climbing.

Even then, the Pisi chief said local sales were holding up because of steady demand from builders of medium-height buildings.

Demand, however, was still low compared to the 1990s.

"Sales of long products such as bars and rods grew between 5 percent and 7 percent in 2005," Tong said. "Sales of flat products like sheets decreased slightly, while demand products used for food packaging was maintained."

In a related development, the Tin Can Manufacturers Association of the Philippines Inc. said prices of their products might go up by about 6 percent due to difficulties in securing supply of tin plates.

TCMAPI president Henry A. Tañedo said can makers buy all their tin plates from abroad-usually from the United States, Japan, South Africa, Australia and Taiwan.

Tin plates currently fetch $950 a metric ton.

"Our suppliers are telling us that their prices may move by the middle or the latter part of May," he said. "This could mean an increase in local prices to P3.30 for a size 202 can or the size used for sardines."

Size 202 tin cans make up bulk of local demand or about 800 million pieces a year, he said.

However, Tañedo clarified that the 20-centavo hike would mean a return to price levels in October 2005 when TCMAPI first announced plans to raise the price for a size 202 can by 16 centavos or about 7 percent.

"That plan did not push through because international prices of tin plates softened in the succeeding month, which reflected to local prices of P3.10 per can," he said. "The situation right now is a different story.

Asean moves to implement major KL trade agreements

THE ECONOMY IS EXPECTED TO gain from moves of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to start implementing agreements signed in last year's summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said an example was the Asean Single Window (ASW) program that is expected to reduce business costs by cutting red tape.

"The reduction in red tape will be done by assigning the tasks of handling all control processes at the border to a single agency, notably customs administration," Favila explained.

The Philippines and Thailand are the pilot economies in developing the ASW program, which was adopted during the Asean Economic Ministers Meet last December.

Further, Favila said the framework agreement for the Asean-Korea Free Trade Agreement (AKFTA)—also signed in the Kuala Lumpur meeting—was expected to help improve access of Philippine goods to the Korean market.

He said the local shipbuilding and rail transport sectors stood to benefit from the proposed chapters on cross-border investments and trade in services of the AKFTA.

It was estimated that 28 percent of the value of Philippine exports to Korea was still subjected to significant tariffs.

Asean members expect to identify goods that would be provided preferential treatment in the AKFTA at the 12th AEM Retreat and Related Meetings that the Philippines will be hosting on May 13-16.

Asean members are likewise expected to benefit from the Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), which would allow skilled personnel and professionals as well as relevant products to cross borders more easily. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

SMC hybrid securities lure $450M in offers

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CAPITAL FUNDING Ltd.. (SMCF) , a special purpose unit of San Miguel Corp., has attracted half a billion dollars in subscriptions for its hybrid securities offer from the international market, INQUIRER sources said.

The hybrid issue was marketed to investors in Singapore and Hong Kong last week and among investors in Geneva and London this week.

San Miguel president Ramon Ang earlier said the benchmark size for the hybrid securities was around $300 million.

Sources said, however, that some $450 million in orders have already piled up.

The final size of the offering has yet to be announced.

In its offering circular, San Miguel said it will prepay $300 million worth of outstanding debt out of the proceeds of its public offer of a rare type of shares.

The company also sees itself incurring roughly $250 million in additional long-term debt this year.

As of Dec. 31, San Miguel's total long-term debt stood at P94 billion or approximately $1.8 billion.

The hybrid securities, dubbed as a benchmark size offering of "perpetual non-cumulative, nonvoting preferred shares" is a mix of equity and debt.

It is the first of its kind among corporate issues in Asia.

The preferred shares will pay a fixed return that will be set later. It has no fixed maturity but can be paid back after five years.

The hybrid product allows San Miguel to raise equity without diluting common shareholders and without increasing the debt in its books.

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BMW 120i	Black Sapphire	2005	4,258 kms	P1,920,000
BMW 120i Exec.	Titanium Silver	2005	7,737 kms	P1,880,000
BMW 320i	Arctic	2005	10,316 kms	P2,110,000
BMW 318i Exec.*	Orient Blue	2004	31,311 kms	P1,650,000
BMW 318i M Sport*	Imola Red	2005	17,774 kms	P1,800,000
BMW 323i*	Cosmos Black	1999	66,671 kms	P1,100,000
BMW 325i Exec.*	Titanium Silver	2003	18,769 kms	P1,750,000
BMW 325i Exec.*	Sienna Red	2004	30,000 kms	P1,850,000
BMW 325i Exec.*	Black Sapphire	2004	32,000 kms	P1,850,000
BMW 523i (E 39)	Dunkel Blue	1997	81,772 kms	P1,050,000
BMW X5 3.0i Exec.	Black Sapphire	2004	13,495 kms	P4,600,000
BMW X5 3.0d Exec.	Titanium Silver	2005	7,469 kms	P4,800,000
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of various Laboratory Equipment and Apparatus (Universal Testing Machine, Motorized Flow Table, Laboratory Oven, Analytical Balance and other Apparatus)

The Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Norte through the General Fund of 2006 intends to apply the following amount being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC):

1.	PR# 100(01)06-4-0998	Php	2,400,000.00
2.	PR# 100(01)06-4-0999	Php	390,000.00
3.	PR# 100(01)06-4-0997	Php	225,000.00
4.	PR# 100(01)06-4-0995	Php	150,000.00
5.	PR# 100(01)06-4-0996	Php	131,500.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Norte now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders of Laboratory Equipment and Apparatus. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

	Schedule of Activities	Date	Time
1.	Issuance of Bid Documents	May 08 to 12, 2006	
2.	Pre-Bid Conference	May 17, 2006	10:00 A.M.
3.	Opening of Bids & Eligibility Requirements	May 30, 2006	10:00 A.M.

All activities shall be held at the Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Bldg., Dipolog City, unless announced otherwise.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Secretariat Bids and Awards Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below. Bidding Documents shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable amount of *One Thousand (Php 1,750.00) pesos.* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Provincial Government of Zamboanga del Norte reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liabilities to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FIBER OPTIC CABLE SYSTEM AT LEYTE GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD
EDC06-049

The Approved Budget is P1,054,700.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 45 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o M. C. Barile) starting **April 26, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00).**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **May 3, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** at the Bidding Room, First Floor, Bldg. V, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on May 16, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC - EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--April 26, 2006)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
PNOC P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47 / 893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category C and D, IAC Small, Sub-Category B, Specialty in Electrical Works of General Building-Building & Industrial Plant and have completed within the last ten (10) years at least one (1) supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of electrical distribution system contract amounting to at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE COTABATO EXPANDED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
STAGE VII (2 BARANGAYS/6 SITIOS)
EDC 06-053

The Approved Budget is Php 5,588,546.42 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 180 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o F.T. Tolibas local 5179) starting April 26, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand (Php 1,000.00).

Site Inspection is on May 10-11, 2006 For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on May 15, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Bldg. V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor Building V, Energy Center Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of May 23, 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC - EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--April 26 & May 2, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

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Her surviving children: **Carmen Cajulis, Lourdes Velhagen, Pilar Guevarra, Mercedes Buhain, Soledad Ilagan, Rafael Balda, Mary Jane Aquino**; sons-in-law: **Eladio Guevatra, Renato Buhain, Angelito Ilagan, Michael Aquino**; grandchildren **Joseph (Tess) Cajulis, Max Velhagen, III; Raymund Velhagen, Catherin Paje, Ramon Guevarra, Benedict (Susan) Buhain, Benjamin Buhain, Bernadette (Benjie) Soberano, Renato Buhain, Jr.; Arlene (Neil) Fitzgerald, Adrian (Michelle) Ilagan, Jolo** and **Anika Aquino**; 10 great grandchildren, brother **Salvador Franco, Jr.**; and sisters: **Asuncion Fernandez** and **Natividad Sellers**, nephews, nieces and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the repose of her soul.

Viewing of ashes will be at Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park.

> "The Lord Jesus says, I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself." *–John 14:3*

Victor "Pee Wee" Ocampo Francisco

Passed away on April 24, 2006 at the age of 66.

He is survived by his wife **Connie**; children **Ed** and **Moy**, **Nicky** and **Alma**, **Mylene**, **Fr. Manoling S.J.** and **Vincent**; his grandchildren **Miggy**, **Isabel**, **Gabsy** and **Bianca**; and his companion **Lani**.

His remains lie in state at San Jose Seminary Chapel,
Ateneo, Loyola Heights, Q.C.
Daily mass at 8 p.m.,
Interment after 9 a.m. Saturday mass.

MARIA NOENA (AMIMEE) RAMIREZ

Passed away in the peace of the Lord
at the age of 81 on April 23, 2006
(Sunday after Easter, Feast of the Divine Mercy) at 1:10 p.m.

Her sister - **Sr. Perla icm, Nelia, Sr. Vianney spc, Maria Nita, Mina, Aurora** and brother - **Joselito, Joaquin (Jake Jr.)**, their families and children as well as grandchildren request their other relatives, classmates, friends in religious life and the former students of Aimee to pray for the repose of her soul. The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on Thursday, April 27th, 9:30 a.m. at the Arlington Funeral Parlor (Chapel A) with Fr. Paul van Daelen, cicm as main celebrant.

Interment will be followed at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque.

LOURDES MAÑALAC ARCEGA

April 5, 1916 - April 22, 2006

Peacefully joined our Creator at the age of 90.

In eternity, she now joins her husband **DOMINGO ARCEGA** (†)

Her children **JESUS & MARIKA, RAMON & JOY, DANILO & SUSA, LORNADINA & VLADIMIR SUAREZ**, Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren, Family and Friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Shrine, Doña Juana Rodriguez Avenue, Broadway, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 29, 2006 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral Parish, 39 Lantana St., Cubao, Quezon City.

VICTOR EMPREMIADO VILLASEÑOR

of Lucban, Quezon

Peacefully joined the Lord on April 25, 2006 at the age of 68.

His loving wife **HELEN RACELIS VILLASEÑOR**; daughter **YAYO** and son-in-law **WILLIAM MARTINEZ** and grandchildren; siblings **DELFIN "Totoy"**, **SOLEDAD "Soling" NAVARRO** and **JOSEFINA "Josie"**; brother-in-law **FRANCISCO NAVARRO**; and nephews, nieces, cousins **Rene** and **Letty Palines**, **Flor** and **Marciano "Boy" Empremiado**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His cremains lie in state at the **Capilla San Aemilliani, Arlington East The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Avenue cor. Mercedes Avenue, Pasig City** and will be transferred to Lucban, Quezon on April 27, 2006 (Thursday).

Interment will be on April 28, 2006 (Friday) at the Lucban Catholic Cemetery.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

Tourism Jobs Fair draws praises from jobseekers

THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED 1st Tourism Jobs Fair (TJF) continues to draw praises from jobseekers and employers, all are urging the Department of Tourism (DOT) to make it a regular annual event.

The applicants noted that among the many job fairs around, only the DOT's TJF had exhibitors/employers from the various sectors of the tourism industry conducting interviews onsite.

"The TJF has exceeded my expectations because in most job fairs, the applicants are just asked to submit their resumes. In the TJF, an applicant goes through an initial interview right away and that makes the applicants happy," said King Gonzales, a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management from the College of Saint Benilde.

Like many of the applicants, Gonzales learned about the TJF from the DOT's TV plug, but he never expected it to have such a big number of employers and positions to choose from.

"The Tourism Jobs Fair gives me an opportunity to have options. In fact, I was surprised that the vacant slots were not only for rank and file, but also for managerial positions, including that for a general manager," Gonzales added.

Such was the case that many of the applicants were thankful for not having to travel around from one place to another to look for a company to hire them. The companies and the positions they were targeting were all gathered under one roof and hooked up online to the TJF's computerized jobs databank.

Thus, the fair attracted even those from far away provinces like Cagayan Valley from where Jonathan R. Antonio, a graduate of BS Economics, traveled all the way to the PICC for the TJF.

The country's first industry-specific jobs fair organized by the DOT exclusively for travel and tourism, the TJF had a total of 324 employers/exhibitors offering over 34,000 jobs in its Davao, Cebu and Manila legs.

On the first day alone, some 25,000 jobseekers from all over the Philippines have logged at www.tourismjobs.ph, the website linked to the TJF databank.

Of that number, more than 2,500 applicants from Davao, Cebu and Manila are for final interview by companies, with many others reportedly hired on the spot by various travel firms and the bulk still being processed or undergoing further testing and evaluation.

Applicants, especially new graduates who need additional or specialized skills, were asked to register with the Tourism Industry Board Foundation Inc (Tibfi) or the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) for further training to beef up their qualifications and chances of getting hired.

The TJF has ushered in the tourism industry's year-round job creation, hiring, and training as part of the DOT's TourismJOBs (Jobs, Opportunities, Businesses) program, which comes on the heels of increasing foreign arrivals over the past two years.

The significant surge in both foreign and domestic tourism has prompted the DOT and the rest of the industry to expand capacity, which at present can accommodate only 3 million tourists a year. The DOT is targeting some 5 million foreign arrivals and $5 billion dollar receipts by 2010.

The targeted capacity expansion also requires additional and highly specialized manpower to meet the emerging requirements of today's tourists and the targeted surge in arrivals in the next four to five years.

This early, the TJF is contributing significantly to that goal. "The TJF is one of the best programs of the current administration. It creates a link between the government and the private sector through job generation. I just hope that this program will be sustained through the coming years," said Mary Dianne Rose S. Molina, 20, a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from Miriam College.

Beach Hut hits Boracay's shores

BORACAY-BOUND SUN WORSHIPPERS are in for an unusual sight as Beach Hut flies in a beach-loving pantomime to the island. Gerry the Mime will be making his rounds, wordlessly preaching the merits of clear-spray sunblock, on a campaign to discourage the use of messy sunblock lotions that leave you looking like a clown.

If Gerry the Mime spots you with white gunk on your face and body, be ready to be spritzed with Beach Hut Clear Spray Sunblock. After all, the last thing you would like to pair with that stylish bikini and bright flipflops is a pantomime-like face with full-on white make-up!

Beach Hut Clear Spray Sunblock is a waterproof, sweatproof, broad-spectrum SPF 36 formula that lets you head out in minutes: You can bask in the sun, engage in water sports, or frolic on the beach without having to suffer the pasty and mask-like effect of regular sunblock lotions!

Gerry the Mime can be spotted at Airtoo booths in Boracay. Airtoo is the newest innovation in body art in the form of temporary airbrushed tattoos. Every purchase of Beach Hut Sunblock entitles you to a free Airtoo. Just present your bottle of Beach Hut Clear-Spray Sunblock at the booths located at Bora Budget Mart (D'Mall) or Juice Bar (La Plazoleta) in Boracay to avail yourself of an airbrushed tattoo.

For more information on Beach Hut Clear-Spray Sunblock, call 376-2283 or log on to www.lotionsucks.com. It's available at Mercury Drug, Robinsons Supermarkets, Rustan's, Shopwise, SM Supermarkets and Watson's stores nationwide.

Beach Hut
Beach Hut

LCR FORM 10.1 (LCRO)

Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Province of Misamis Oriental
Cagayan de Oro City

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that SALUS C. TACLINDO has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from MARIA SALUS to SALUS in the Certificate of Live Birth of MARIA SALUS CAÑETE who was born on May 4, 1947 at San Fernando, Cebu and whose parents are MIGUEL CAÑETE and FLABIANA ORTIGA.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition within this office not later than May 4, 2006.

(Sgd.) NORMA S. DIPUTADO
City Civil Registrar

(PDI – April 26 & May 3, 2006)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47 / 893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to re-bid for the following projects:

TWO-YEAR CONTRACT FOR THE REPAIR/FABRICATION OF VARIOUS DRILLING TOOLS, TUBULARS, AND EQUIPMENT USING API SPECS EXCEPT SPECS 7

EDC 06-047

The contract duration is two years. Engagement is on-call basis.

Application Forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at Fort Bonifacio (c/o M. R. C. Barile) starting **April 26, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (P500.00)**.

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **May 8, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** at the Bidding Room, First Floor, Bldg. V, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of May 23, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC - EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS M. DOLOR
Bac Chairman

(PDI – April 26, 2006)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority

Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis Street, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines
Telephones (632) 5513438 • 5513454 • Facsimile (632) 5513436
E-mail: info@peza.gov.ph • Website: www. peza.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for CY 2005 intends to apply the sum of PhP 3,470,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **PEZA Network Equipment and Structured Cabling for Head Office, BEZ and CEZ**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the PEZA Network Requirements; a) Structured Cabling of Head Office, Cavite Economic Zone and Bataan Economic Zone; b) Upgrade of Existing Head Office Router, c) 3 Units Remote Router with Complete Accessories, d) 10 Units Edge Switches with Complete Accessories, and e) 15 Units UPS (500VA). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (RA 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC and at least five (5) years in the Structured Cabling and IT Equipment Industry and is able to supply, install and configure the proposed Structured Cabling and IT equipments. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders from 19 April to 05 May 2006, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P2,000.00 and submission of a certified copy of their G-EPS Certificate of Registration. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 12 May 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 25 May 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than 1% *of the ABC*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 25 May 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor Social Hall, PEZA Bldg., Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City
Tel. No. 891-6444 / Telefax No. 551-9587
E-mail: peza_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 19 & 26, 2006)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY WATER DISTRICT

263 Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City
Tel. Nos. 433-2408, 433-5032, 433-6802
Fax No. (48) 433-6803

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Puerto Princesa City Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder projects:

Name of the Project	:	Supply & Delivery of Lot 1-122 pcs. uPVC pipes, Lot 11-One (1) Set Gas Chlorinator 0-200PPD & One (1) Unit Gas Chlorinator Booster Pump (Centrifugal Pump) and Lot III – Two (2) pcs. Butterfly Valve
Location	:	Puerto Princesa City Water District Stockyard
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	Lot I – P768,600.00, Lot II – P331,770.00 & Lot III – P348,040.00
Delivery Period	:	Fifteen (15) Calendar Days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bids shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	April 27, 2006 – May 8, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 9, 2006, 1:30 P.M. PPCWD Board Room
3. Deadline for Submission of Bids	May 23, 2006, 1:30 P.M. PPCWD Board Room
4. Opening of Bids	May 23, 2006, 1:30 P.M. PPCWD Board Room

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of the following : Lot I – P1,000.00, Lot II – P 500.00 & Lot III – P 500.00

The Puerto Princesa City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ENGR. VICENTE D. ABREA
PPCWD BAC Chairman

(PDI – April 26 & May 3, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court through the Committee on Bids invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

NAME OF PROJECT:

Office Supplies for lower courts (NCJR and Provinces)

Name of Project	Approved Budget	Source of Funding
LOT 1 - OFFICE SUPPLIES FOR LOWER COURTS (NCJR)	P 9,855,558.02	Current Appropriations for the lower courts (CY-2006)
LOT 2 - OFFICE SUPPLIES FOR LOWER COURTS (PROVINCES)	P 37,846,179.43	Current Appropriations for the lower courts (CY-2006)

PERIOD OF DELIVERY:

NCJR - Twenty (25) calendar days after issuance of Purchase Order (P.O.)
PROVINCES - Sixty (60) calendar days after issuance of Purchase Order (P.O.)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

FOR LOT 1 AND 2:

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Date: **03 May 2006, Wednesday**
Venue: Conference Room (Ground Floor) Centennial Building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Malate, Manila
Time: 1:00 p.m. (for lot 1)
2:00 p.m. (for lot 2)

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

The eligibility requirements of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative, and the bids will be opened, thereafter, in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, to be held on:

Date: **17 May 2006, Wednesday**
Venue: Training Room Center (Ground Floor) Centennial building, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Malate, Manila
Time: 1:00 p.m. (for lot 1)
2:00 p.m. (for lot 2)

Prospective bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or its Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Interested bidders may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from **The Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, 3rd Floor Annex Building, Supreme Court**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) each for LOT 1 and LOT 2**, prior to the conduct of pre-bid conference. For additional information, the bidders may contact the Secretariat, **Ms. Norma C. Josue at tel. no. 5266419.**

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to: 1) reject any or all bids, 2) waive any defects or informalities therein, 3) or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be most advantageous and beneficial to the government.

18 April 2006

(Sgd.) JOSE P. PEREZ
Chairman

(PDI – April 19 & 26, 2006)

PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY

7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, 107 Paseo de Roxas St., 1226 City of Makati
Tel. Nos. (02) 817-4711•(02)817-4712•(02)817-4713
Facsimile Nos. (02) 815-2660•(02) 813-1441/46

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

The **PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY (PRA), after two (2) failed biddings,** is inviting interested parties to submit proposals for the negotiated sale and/or lease of the following properties on a serviced land basis (major roads and tapping points for utilities are available), located at the Central Business Park 1 A, Bay City (formerly known as Boulevard 2000), Pasay City, for mixed use or commercial development purposes.

BLK	LOT		AREA*(m^2)	MODE
A1	1	corner	3,843	SALE
A2	1	corner	3,462	SALE
A2	2	interior	2,568	SALE
A2	3	interior	2,611	SALE
A2	4	interior	2,573	SALE
A2	5	corner	3,321	SALE
A3	1	corner	2,500	SALE
A3	2	interior	2,222	SALE
B4		portion	5,825	SALE OR LEASE
B7		portion	4,648	SALE OR LEASE
B5		portion	18,348	SALE OR LEASE

* Subject to final survey

1. Sealed and properly labeled Prequalification and Proposal Envelopes may be submitted starting **27 April until 26 May 2006** and must be addressed to:

   OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER/CEO
   PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
   Subject: NEGOTIATED SALE AND/OR LEASE
   CBP 1 A PROPERTIES

   a. **Prequalification Envelope**, sealed and labeled must contain the following **legal documents**:
      1) Individuals: birth certificate duly authenticated by the local civil registrar or NSO or certificate of naturalization or passport to prove the Philippine citizenship and that he is at least 21 years of age. (for sale and lease).
      2) Government corporations (including LGU)/government financial institutions: certified true copy of the charter creating the corporation or other incorporation papers from the SEC and other documents to prove that it is a government owned or controlled corporation (for sale and lease).
      3) Partnership/corporation/association: DTI/SEC registration and certification that the partnership/corporation/association is at least 60% owned by citizens of the Philippines and organized and registered under Philippine Laws. (for lease only).
      4) 2005 income tax returns or 2005 certificate of compensation payment/tax withheld in cases of employees, 2005 business tax returns and tax clearance dated May 2006 issued by the BIR must be submitted to prove the full and timely payment of taxes, per Executive Order No. 398 (for sale and lease).

   b. **Proposal envelope/s** for each property, sealed and properly labeled as to the block/lot number of the property and the proposed mode of acquisition (i.e., cash sale, lease) and must include the corresponding **tender deposit/s** in the form of a cashier's or manager's check payable to **PEA** and drawn from any universal bank. : •Sale offer: at least 10% of total offer •Lease offer: equivalent to at least three (3) months lease for the property. Interested parties may submit proposals for several properties.
2. After evaluation and ranking of offers, only the offerors of the highest and best bid clusters shall be invited for negotiation.
3. Copies of the Technical Information and Development Guidelines may be obtained from the Marketing Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati MM from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM starting 24 April until 26 May 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: FIVE THOUSAND PESOS **(P5,000.00)** in cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check payable to PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY.
4. Material misrepresentation and/or breach of warranty made in the Prequalification Documents and Proposal shall cause the forfeiture of the tender deposit in favor of the PRA. The forfeiture of the Tender Deposit shall not bar the PRA from pursuing all other remedies available under the TOR and applicable laws.
5. PRA reserves the right to reject any proposal or waive any defects or formality, impose additional terms and conditions and accept the proposal most advantageous to the Government.
6. For further information, inquiries may be made to the Marketing Department in the above address and at telephone numbers 817-4711 to 13 (trunk line) and 813-7104 (direct line).

(Sgd.) SILVESTRE H. BELLO III
General Manager/CEO

(PDI – April 22, 24 & 26, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
San Ramon, Zamboanga City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

CONSTRUCTION OF STANDARD MANUFACTURING BUILDINGS 2 & 3 AT THE ZAMBOECOZONE FIRST INDUSTRIAL PARK

1. The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA), through **SARO No. D-05-07289** dated December 22, 2005 intends to apply the following sum being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the aforesaid projects, to wit:

   Construction of one (1) unit Standard Manufacturing Building 2 — P 6,552,540.27
   Construction of one (1) unit Standard Manufacturing Building 3 — P 6,552,540.27

   Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The ZCSEZA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the aforesaid projects. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs and secure the Eligibility Documents upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00)** for each project. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P 2,500.00)** for each project.

   The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

	Construction of One (1) Unit Standard Manufacturing Building 2	Construction of One (1) Unit Standard Manufacturing Building 3
Issuance of Eligibility Documents	April 28 - May 10, 2006	May 4 – 15, 2006
Deadline for Submission & Opening of Eligibility Documents	May 11, 2006 1:30 PM, AVR, 3rd Floor ZAMBOECOZONE Building, Z.C.	May 16, 2006 1:30 PM, AVR, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Building, Z.C.
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 11, 2006 until a day before bid opening	May 16, 2006 until a day before bid opening
Pre-Bid Conference	May 25, 2006 10:00 AM, AVR, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Building, Z.C.	May 25, 2006 10:00 AM, AVR, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Building, Z.C.
Submission, Receipt & Opening of Bids	June 6, 2006 10:00 AM, AVR, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Building, Z.C.	June 7, 2006 10:00 AM., AVR, 3rd Floor ZAMBOECOZONE Building, Z.C.

Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address and dates stated above. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following form:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, Certified Check, Cashiers' Check, or Manager's Check	One Percent (1%)
GSIS Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Completion of the Works for each project is required by 155 calendar days.
5. The ZCSEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) GEORGINA PANTALEON-YU
Chairman and Administrator
Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority
Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City
(062) 992-0409, (062) 993-0209
E-mail: Ecozone_bac@yahoo.com

(PDI – April 26 & May 3, 2006)

Manufacturing output drops 11.8% in Feb.

With drop in production, RP seen to be hard put in attaining '06 GDP growth target

By Michelle V. Remo

THE OUTPUT OF THE COUNTRY'S manufacturing sector, as measured by the volume of production index (VoPI), fell by 11.8 percent year-on-year in February, raising concerns this might pull down the country's economic growth prospects.

The decline in February followed an 8.2-percent year-on-year drop in January, according to data released by the National Statistics Office yesterday.

"If this (drop in production) is prolonged, the gross domestic product (GDP) would not easily reach the target," said Victor Abola, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific.

The government has scaled down the GDP growth target this year to between 5.5 and 6.2 percent, from the earlier goal of between 5.7 and 6.3 percent. The adjustment was made in light of increasing oil prices.

The NSO said in its report that the decline in the manufacturing production would be seen largely in the subsectors of wood and wood products, leather, electrical and non-electrical machinery, publishing and printing, footwear and wearing apparel, tobacco, non-metallic mineral products, chemical products and transport equipment.

But while output was lower, the volume of net sales by the manufacturing sector climbed slightly by 0.7 percent.

The NSO also said that the value of output—as measured by the value of production index (VaPI) and which reflects increase in prices—rose by 5.1 percent in February, a slowdown from the 9.6 percent recorded in January.

Average capacity utilization rate stood at 80 percent in February, almost unchanged from the 80.1 percent recorded the previous month.

The NSO said sub-sectors that registered capacity utilization rates of more than the average of 80 percent were the following: Electrical and non-electrical machinery, petroleum products, paper and paper products, miscellaneous manufactures, basical metals, rubber products, leather products, food manufacturing, chemical products and textile.

The government agency also reported that 9.9 percent of manufacturing firms operated at full capacity (90 to 100 percent). More than half, or 57.5 percent, operated at 70- to 89-percent capacity, while 32.6 percent operated below 70-percent capacity.

NPCC: Don't hike prices on account of oil

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL PRICE COORDINATING Council yesterday said current historic highs reached in the global oil market should not be used as a reason for increasing the prices of basic goods.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, who is also chair of the joint public and private sector NPCC, yesterday said retailers would be selling their goods that are still in their inventory at current prices.

Favila said he also received the commitment of manufacturers.

"Moreover, the country continues to enjoy a strong peso, (which helps keep) prices of imported raw materials stable," he said.

Still, the trade chief said the government would be on guard against possible price manipulation on the part of unscrupulous retailers.

Also, Favila said the Department of Trade and Industry had proposed the implementation of the Daylight Saving Time scheme to help mitigate the impact of rising oil prices in the country.

"The private sector has agreed to this and we would have to take this up with the Cabinet for further discussion," Favila said. "If this would push through, the DST could be implemented for six weeks or so, until the rainy season comes."

The DST was implemented in the mid-1990s under national emergency measures aimed at energy conservation.

Used worldwide, DST requires that clocks be reset to an hour earlier to take advantage of the longer daytime hours during summer.

Favila said other recommendations that the DTI presented to the private sector included the adoption of four-day work weeks or an added holiday every week.

He said companies were not as open to reduced work time as they were to the DST scheme.

In yesterday's meeting, Favila said the NPCC agreed to make sensitivity analyses to determine what the reasonable price levels of basic goods would be in the face of continuing uptrend in oil prices.

"(These analyses) would allow us to determine the impact of oil prices on prime commodities in centavo terms so we can identify business entities that are profiteering," he said.

Latest data from the NPCC show that prices of most manufactured and processed goods have remained steady over the past three months, except for select brands of canned goods, milk, coffee, condiments and soaps, which either increased or decreased by a range of 25 centavos to P3.

The price of hard flour decreased by P15 to an average of P590 a bag from January levels, while that of soft flour went down P10 over the same period.

Cement prices are "stable" at P165 per 40-kilogram bag over the past three months. Last month, prices of 10-millimeter steel bars went down by P2 to P98 each.

Prices of rice, cooking oil, fruits, meat and poultry products "did not move in the past three months," Favila said.

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RP won't import sugar; sees higher crop yields

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE EXPECTED INCREASE IN sugar production this year has put on hold the government's plan to import 30,000 metric tons of sugar, the Sugar Regulatory Authority yesterday said.

Sugar production has reached its peak, and there is now a better chance of exceeding the projected 2.018 million metric tons (MT) output for the crop year 2006-2007, SRA Administrator James Christopher Ledesma said.

In fact, Ledesma said the output this year may even reach 2.04 million metric tons.

"We see a higher production for this crop year, ranging from 5 to 8 percent, as the good price has encouraged farmers to take care of their crops better," Ledesma said at the sidelines of the International Sugar Development Forum in Makati City.

As of Feb. 26, 2006, production had reached 1.412 million tons, which was 70 percent of the projected sugar output, SRA data showed.

The SRA, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, previously allowed some 50,000 metric tons of sugar to be imported from abroad to meet the country's demand as local sugar production could only sustain domestic requirements.

The sugar industry has started shipping part of its export quota, totaling 216,438 MT, to the United States this year.

The country's export quota to the US rose by 58 percent, or by 80,000 metric tons, from 137, 353 metric tons.

The increase in the country's export quota and the volatile world sugar prices have triggered market speculation, pushing retail prices to a high of P55 to P60 per kilo early in January.

Last week, retail prices of sugar have stabilized within the range of P38 to P42 per kilo as the imports are expected to arrive in June, putting a stop to the spike in prices, the SRA administrator said.

10-year T-bond rate slides to 7%

THE YIELD ON THE 10-YEAR Treasury bond rate dipped by 50 basis points to 7 percent yesterday due to the high level of cash in the market and strong appetite for long-term investments.

But National Treasury Omar Cruz told reporters the rate could have declined further if not for reports that the government was considering lifting the recently imposed value-added tax on petroleum products.

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted only P3.315 billion worth of bids compared with the borrowing program of P3.5 billion.

The 10-year bonds were still oversubscribed, with tenders reaching P7.76 billion, reflecting that the domestic capital market is still awash with cash.

Cruz said the partial rejection of bids was done to send the signal that there was no reason for the market to ask for a higher risk premium because the government remains committed to its fiscal reform program of reducing the budget deficit to P125 billion this year and to zero by 2008.

He denied reports that the government's policymakers have already decided to remove the VAT on oil, a proposal that was estimated to result in P29 billion a year in foregone revenues, thus derailing the fiscal reform agenda.

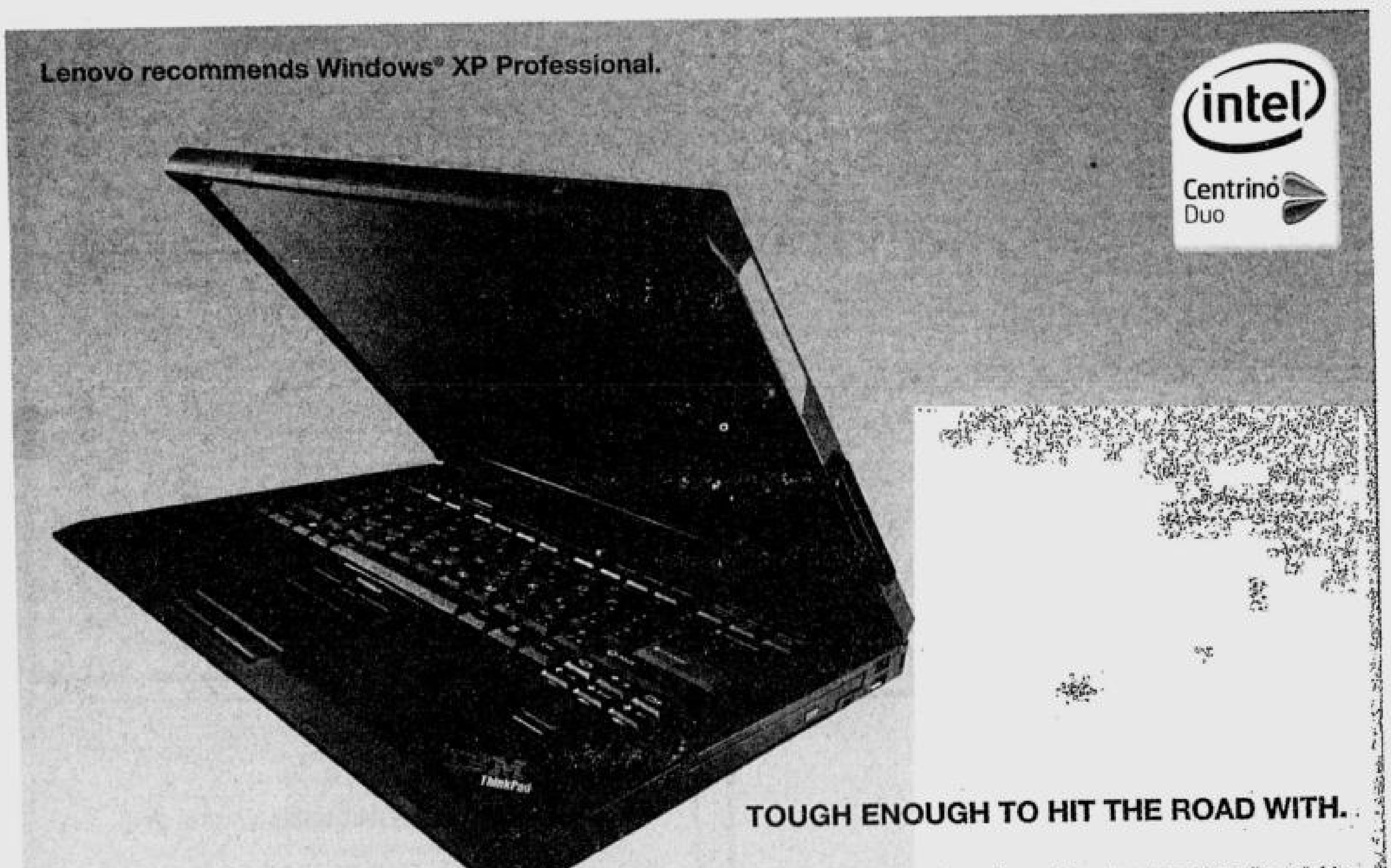
The lifting of the VAT on oil was proposed by Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor to cushion the effects of soaring oil prices.

The Department of Finance, head agency of the Bureau of the Treasury, earlier said it was not inclined to support the proposal to lift the VAT on oil products.

A finance official said that aside from resulting in huge foregone revenues, the move would likewise mean the reopening of the VAT Reform Law to the scrutiny of Congress and therefore put other provisions at risk of being amended.

The performance of the government in terms of generating the promised revenues out of the VAT Reform Law is being closely monitored by credit rating agencies and investors.

The law, which expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity among others and raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent, was estimated to yield P75 billion in additional revenues this year and boost the government's chances of balancing its budget by 2008. *Michelle V. Remo*



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The 'idiot-proof' beast in a moving Arabian Peninsula

By Tessa R. Salazar

(First of three parts)

ALL-TERRAIN TRANSPORT expert Duncan Barbour might as well appear to be doing another Hollywood film in this latest project "commandeering" the routes and paces of the Jeep's latest 4-wheel-drive brute Commander in the ancient land of Oman.

We wouldn't be surprised. After all, his resumé reads like a daydreamer's wish list of silver screen adventure movies. He and his intrepid toy the Barbour All Terrain Tracking, a special camera tracking vehicle for offroad action, have been involved in such logistically challenging films as "Harry Potter," "Gladiator," "The English Patient" and "Golden Eye."

Barbour's group the Wildtrackers (which was the first to put a vehicle atop Victoria Falls) aren't all just about movies. Aside from staging near-impossible offroad vehicle events in remote locations around the world, Barbour has also been training soldiers in the science and art of off-road transport in Namibia.

All eyes on the Commander

For this project for Jeep, however, the Wildtrackers were all eyes on the Commander, surveying nearly 5,000 km of Omani trails for the big brute to tread on. And there was not just one Commander to look after. Barbour led a convoy of motoring journalists (about three batches of them) eagerly intent on driving the 4.7-liter and 5.7-liter V8 Hemi variants of the Commander on the rocky paths of this nation lying squarely in the Arabian Peninsula.

With deep ravines as well as loose gravel and tarmac, the Wadi de Dayqay proved an adequate challenge to zealous rally drivers of the Commander.

But the Jeep Commander, brutish as it may look, has been designed also for more pragmatic purposes. Albeit being dubbed "trail-rated," it is the first seven-seater in a long Jeep line of legendary all-American 4x4 "bad boys."

The number of seats betrays its dual character. It attempts to merge the comfort of soccer-mom SUVs (for well-paved First World highways) with the rough-and-tumble Third World roads (read: weekend offroading).

It may never match the mountain goat capabilities of a Jeep Rubicon (its name derived from the notorious Rockies trail which it conquered handily). But it certainly isn't like your cute SUV pretending to be an off-roader, either. It's serious enough to earn someone like Barbour his undivided attention, especially with V8 Hemi engines being handled by drivers who haven't had extensive off-road experience.

But thanks to the professional guidance of the Wildtrackers and the advanced Quadra Trac II of the Commander, the paths of Oman, a country so rich in mineral deposits they were obstacles in themselves during the drive, turned out to be a pleasant experience free of untoward incidents. The only bodies that took a beating were, as expected, the Jeeps themselves. But they asked for it.

Off-roading for dummies

The Quadra Trac II is the key element of this Jeep, and the one inexperienced off-roaders should give thanks to, according to Barbour. For without it, only the most hardened of trail drivers could have negotiated the paths.

The Quadra Trac has been around since the early '70s. Today electronics, however, has made it more practical to use. Without the Quadra Trac, the Commander would slip or get stuck.

The Quadra Trac II proved its worth during one of the most difficult maneuvers. At the top of an uphill, the Commander was supposed to cross between two large rocks. This meant making the vehicle crawl on large boulders like a dog moving one leg at a time on a rocky beach. Two of the Commanders' tires were up in the air literally one time or another. For such a stunt, the Quadra Trac II system was required, and the expert guidance of the Wildtrackers.

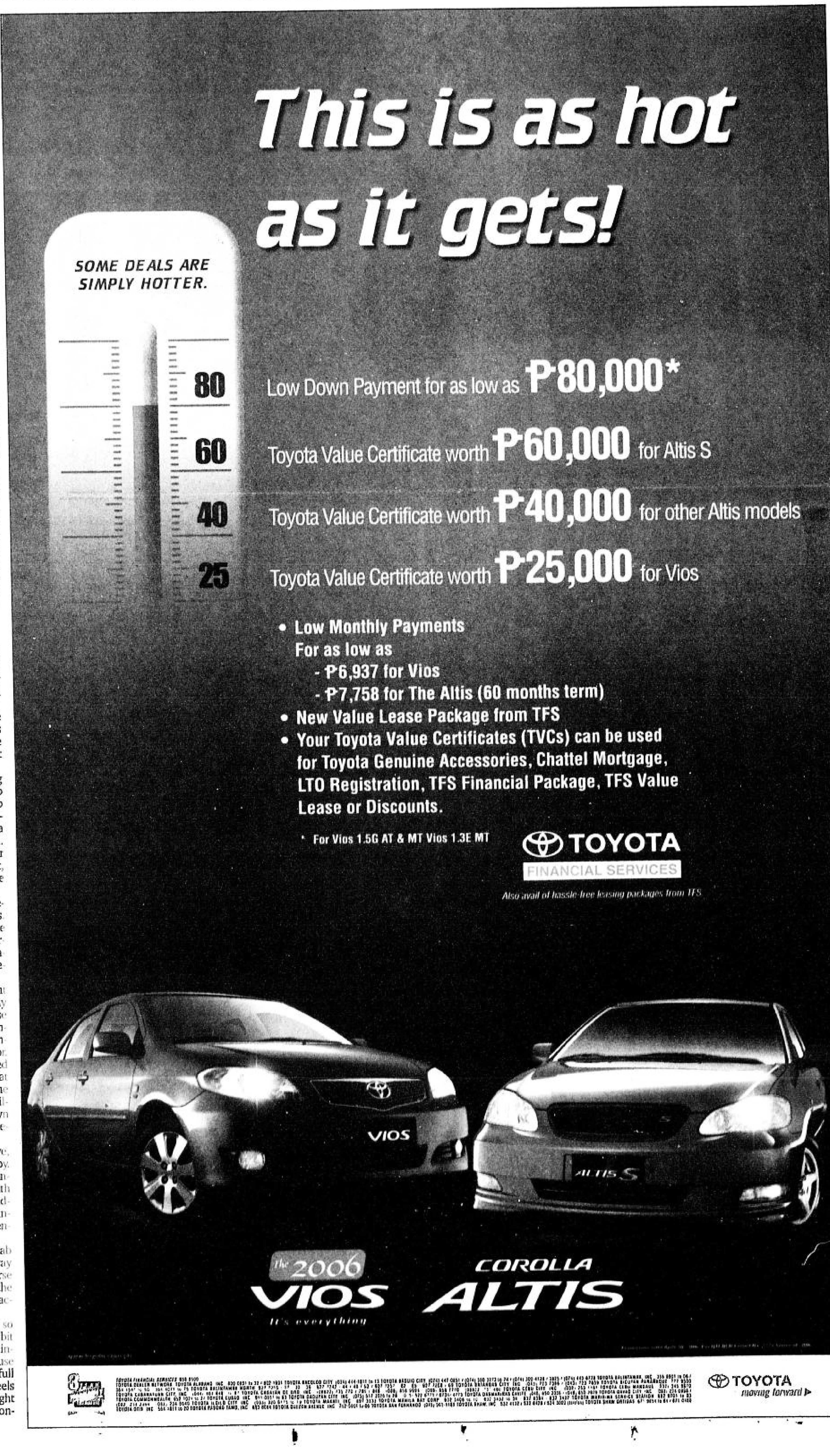
Oman's largely barren landscape exposes geological history dating back millions of years. Layers of rock and silt, like a multitiered cake and water-formed stones reveal that some portions of the paths we were driving on were ancient riverbeds, even at elevations of 1,600 meters (as high as our own Mountain Province).

And at the desert of Muscat, we learned that much earlier, the entire Arabian Peninsula lay beneath the ocean, surfacing during the course of a million years of movement of the continental shelves. It's hard to imagine that today's sunburnt desert was once a stark black ocean floor. But once we saw the caves elegantly sculpted over the ages by sand-laden wind, we knew that the story of Oman was much more than just the story of man's existence. When we speak of millions, even billions of years of a planet's own evolution, we knew forces beyond our comprehension were at work here.

Oman wore its geological heart on its sleeve, so to speak, for everyone of us to see and enjoy. And fascinated we were, as the Jeep Commander let us indulge in our curiosities, what with generous viewing angles not just from windshields and windows, but also from power sunroof with dual skylights for second row passengers.

We were actually on the part of the Arab Peninsula that was gradually moving away from continental Africa on a collision course with the Middle Eastern plate. You could see the plates moving, if you could fast forward the action a hundred million times, that is.

And as the continental shelves move ever so gradually, so were we reminded to do a little bit of the same on the 5.7-liter Hemis. We were instructed to go easy on the low range, because when there's that much power and we go full throttle what we get are just spinning wheels and no grip. In short, we move nowhere. Might as well wait for the Arabian Peninsula to connect to Turkey.



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DRIVING AROUND THE WORLD

Aussie couple, Shell set world record on fuel economy drive

By Charles E. Buban

MAXIMIZING FUEL EFFICIENCY has truly become a worldwide effort and drivers looking to get the most out of every gasoline purchase can get helpful hints from this Australian couple, who in partnership with Shell, has achieved a world record.

After 78 days and 28,970 kilometers across 25 countries, John and Helen Taylor have set a Guinness World Record for fuel efficiency after successfully driving around the world using only 1,303 liters (or 24.4 tank fill ups) of the oil giant's unique gasoline formulation.

Using Shell's next generation gasoline and following the company's FuelStretch driving principles (fuel-efficiency driving tips), the couple drove a standard production model Volkswagen Golf powered by a 1.6-liter fuel straight injection engine, a car which the couple believe is a representative of vehicles across the globe.

22.2 km/liter

The couple, who's based in Australia, averaged an impressive 22.2 km/liter, a figure that exceeded the fuel consumption estimate of Volkswagen for their Golf FSI 1.6 (14.3 km/liter).

The couple, who has more than 34 fuel-economy driving achievements between them, employed simple actions such as avoiding idling and higher speeds, minimizing vehicle drag and performing regular vehicle maintenance.

The first of its kind, the new "Shell Fuel Economy Challenge" Guinness World Record marks the achievement of the lowest fuel consumption during a circumnavigation of the globe by an unmodified standard car.

To achieve the record, Guinness requires its participants to travel in one direction only, covering a distance of at least 28,970 km, but no more than the full length of the equator (which is 40,075 km) as well as requiring one gasoline type throughout the journey.

Moreover, the car needs to be a standard production model.

The couple has driven through 16 European countries, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada before going back to London, where they left off on Jan. 17—the same place the legendary Phileas Fogg began his fictional journey "Around the World in 80 Days."

The couple's journey will also provide Shell's international researchers an opportunity to assess their gasoline formula and enable them to further develop fuel-efficient driving practices appropriate to widely differing road conditions.

Money-saving fuel tips

By using the following money-saving fuel tips from the FuelStretch driving principles, an average driver may be able to follow what the couple has achieved with regard to their gasoline consumption:

- **Drive smoothly**—Aggressive driving can use as much as a third more fuel than safe driving. Avoid accelerating or braking too hard and try to keep your steering as smooth as possible.
- **Use higher gears**—The higher gear you drive in, the lower your engine speed is, which can improve fuel efficiency. So change a gear whenever you can, without stressing the engine.
- **Tune and service your engine**—A well-tuned engine can improve fuel economy by up to four percent, so change your oil and follow your car manufacturer's recommendation on servicing.
- **Keep your tires at the right pressure**—Correctly inflated tires are safer and last longer. A tire that is under inflated by just 1 psi can reduce fuel efficiency by as much as three percent. An underinflated or overinflated tire is also more susceptible to failing.
- **Avoid carrying excess weight**—For every extra 45 kilos you carry, your fuel efficiency can drop by one percent to two percent. So keep your trunk or back seat clear of unnecessary items that just add weight to your vehicle.
- **Keep the windows closed**—Wind blowing through an open window will slow you down. To compensate, you may put your foot down harder, using more fuel.
- **Take the roof rack off**—If you're not using your roof rack then remove it. They affect the aerodynamic efficiency of your vehicle and create drag, reducing fuel economy by as much as five percent.
- **Use the correct oil**—Always use the recommended grade of motor oil. Using the manufacturer's recommended lubricant can improve fuel efficiency by one percent to two percent. Higher quality motor oils can also help your engine operate more efficiently.
- **Use cruise control**—Using cruise control on major roads helps you maintain a constant speed and, in many cases, will improve fuel consumption.
- **Avoid excess idling**—Idling gets you nowhere but still burns fuel. Turn the engine off when you're in a line, or waiting for someone, until you need it.

'The Civic is Honda'

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

IN HIS SPEECH DURING THE LAUNCH OF the all-new Honda, Takashi Sekiguchi, the president and general manager of Honda Cars Philippines Inc., said, and I quote: "The Civic represents Honda's heart. The Civic is Honda."

Indeed, the Civic is without a doubt the car that made Honda a car giant in the motoring world. Before Civic, there was only Honda the motorcycle. Until the Civic came, never in the automotive world's wildest imagination that Honda could produce a car of note.

My first encounter with the Civic was in New York City in 1982. My Uncle Amading, the brother of my departed mother, introduced me to it. He was driving one when he fetched me at the Kennedy Airport after I flew in from Brussels.

Before he migrated to America, I remember Uncle Amading saying the first thing he'd do once he earned some money in New York is "to buy a Cadillac." The Cadillac, he said, had been his boyhood dream car.

"I'm just wondering, Uncle, where's your Cadillac?"

"At home," he said. "Why? How did you know I have a Cadillac?"

I told him.

"Oh, you remember," he said. "Yes, truly, the Cadillac has always been my dream car."

"How come you are not using it?"

"Well," he said, "the Cadillac, I found out, is a gas-guzzler. My Honda, this Civic, why it's a gas-miser. Amazing, indeed. My Cadillac consumes almost 10 times the gas intake of this Civic!"

He said he'd use his Cadillac only during weekends, especially when he went to parties in their neighborhood.

"There's no car like this Civic," he said. "Honda has revolutionized the car-making industry."

I remember Arnel Doria, the deputy head of the marketing division, say of Honda's eight-generation Civic during its launch on April 3: "The all-new Civic carries the new 1.8-liter i-VTEC engine which produces the power of a 2.0-liter engine but possesses the economy of a 1.5-liter engine."

Indeed a breakthrough invention when it first hit the road in 1972, the Civic was the first car to pass emission standards in the United States.

For 7 years since its introduction in the Philippines in 1991, the Civic was No. 1 in the passenger car market. To date, Honda has sold 16 million Civics worldwide and close to 85,000 in the country the last 15 years.

The 1.8V manual has an introductory price of P767,000 and the 1.8V automatic P802,000. The 1.8S manual sells at P824,000 and the automatic P859,000.

The 2.0S manual pegs at P932,000, the 2.0S automatic P1,102,000 and the 2.0S-L automatic Pl,117,000.

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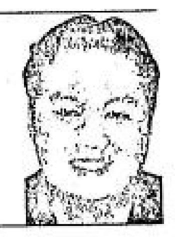

MY IMAGINATION IS IN A VISE grip, kept from thinking of anything else but the image of two cars, in mid-flight on the cover of the August 2005 Motor Trend issue. Ok, so there's a black Dodge Charger R/T being chased by a green Ford Mustang GT, and if this particular cover shot has not been subject to major computer enhancement, then these two cars are going at speeds well past flat-out. Fast enough, in fact, to make these rather portly automobiles catch air after what must have been a dramatic crest in the road.

Bullitt and Steve McQueen allusions aside, the notion that these two vehicles mark the return of the "large displacement performance formula" is very much confirmed. Chrysler (Dodge's parent manufacturer) and Ford have decided to reenter what may be the world's most ill-suited car formula for the moment. Say hello to the apparent return of the American muscle car and it might just work. Bore and stroke a large enough displacement and the performance should come—but at what cost though?

Let us just remind the motoring public that fuel has just reached another all-time high, what with the Abrams rattling of the "armies of democracy" in the deserts of Persia—the inevitable price hike is already upon the world market. This is something of a concern for a genre that takes a full-sized sedan or coupé and slaps on engines with displacements that scream conspicuous consumption and deals with "my pistons are bigger than yours" envy. The trouble is that despite the obvious problems of creating probably two bonafide gas guzzlers, Chrysler and Ford have hit the jackpot with some of the sexiest coachwork, sans rival, in the non-European automotive market segment.

Reinterpretation

Take the 2006 Ford Mustang GT for example. Beautifully styled, this reinterpretation of the late '60s fastback version, is dramatic without being too much of a diva. It takes the lines and the cues of a classic and visually injects just the right amount of necessary evolution. What you see still registers as a Mustang, despite the fact that the car you are cross referencing is almost 40 years in the past. One can say that the retro-designed '06 Mustang carries the lines of the '68 model well into this millennium.

Powering this new Mustang is a 4.6-liter, 24-valve V8 that goes all the way past 6000 rpm. Peak power is rated at 300 horses with the torque figures pulling 320 ft lb; good to 60 mph in five and a tenths of a second (5.1 ticks). That is a fast Pony in any book and the big two-door coupé has been described as rather agile for its weight class, all of 3,523 lb (approximately 1,600 kilos). In the fossil fuel department, the GT version will do a factory claimed 17-mpg or just over 7 kilometers per liter of gas. Yeah, right.

Unnoticeable to some

Bigger, bolder and bordering on maniacal is the Dodge Charger R/T. While not as visually keyed into the past models bearing the same name, this car is one that very few would not notice in a crowded parking lot. Taking a cue from its Daimler-Chrysler stable mate, the 300C, the Charger is also over the top and in your face in a sense, especially in Cosa Nostra livery: any shade of black that is. Nothing says mob hit man better than this car except the original '68 Charger R/T, with the 440-cubic inch V8. Alright, a Tommy gun with a round drum magazine might, just as a piano wire garrote will work as well too.

Factory specified with a 5.7-liter HEMI V8 gas, enabling the four-door sedan to hit 60 mph in a hair under six seconds. The 350 bhp and 390 ft lb of torque are generous performance numbers for an engine that must be very familiar with the laws of inertia, as this is a vehicle that weighs in at 4131 lb (1877 kilograms), heavy in most books. Another guzzler, it is amazing that it shares the same Environmental Protection Agency mileage rating as the Mustang GT, as 17 mpg or 7 km/liter seems an acceptable, necessary evil in this market segment. Were we born yesterday?

Here lies my problem. Something fast must also be frugal, right? What better way to show case one's R&D ability than to create vehicles that display velocity without the voracious appetite for petroleum. These two cars have slightly shaken the foundations of my beliefs, not in a 1906 San Francisco quake manner, but just like going over a very nasty, ill-planned speed bump. There probably isn't any major damage that's been done, but the experience is worrying nonetheless.

Hyundai introduces flagship SUV in Philippines ahead of US

IT IS A VEHICLE DESIGNED FOR THE ultracompetitive American automobile market. But South Korean automaker Hyundai has made it available first in the Philippines ahead of the United States.

The all-new Hyundai Santa Fe was unveiled recently at the 2nd Manila International Motor Show and is now available in Hyundai's showrooms all over the country.

The Santa Fe is the first vehicle designed at Hyundai's design center in Irvine, California and it is targeted to meet American consumers' demand for safety, style, sophistication and performance. Hyundai expects it to go head to head with the world's leading unibody sport utility vehicles such as the Lexus RX, the Acura MDX and the Volvo XC90.

Ma. Fe Perez Agudo, executive vice president and COO of Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) said Filipinos are fortunate to have the Santa Fe locally earlier than the market for which it was created.

Special market

"The Philippines is a very special market for Hyundai. That's why we were able to have the Santa Fe ahead of North America," she said.

The Santa Fe is expected to join Hyundai's growing list of bestsellers in the Philippines that includes the Filipinos' favorite van, the Starex; the 2005 Compact Car Of The Year, the Getz; and the "in" thing among young professionals nowadays, the compact SUV Tucson.

The Santa Fe is real-time four-wheel-drive that runs on a powerful yet efficient 2.7-liter V6 engine. It is equipped with state-of-the-art safety features such as the Electronic Stability Control, four-channel Anti-lock Braking System, Electronic Brake force Distribution, and airbags. Its interior is also one of the most package-efficient in the market, with more legroom for the second and third row seats. Yes, it has a third row of seats that's absent in luxury SUVs.

Image booster

Agudo said that since the Santa Fe is a unibody SUV, it has a more refined, sedan-like feel unlike other SUVs in the Philippine market today that are basically trucks underneath.

The Santa Fe is expected to further boost Hyundai's image as the fastest-growing car brand in the Philippines. This year, Hyundai's Philippine distributor Hari won the prestigious Best Distributorship Award for Asia Pacific after it exceeded its previous sales record by 103 percent.

VOLVO UNVEILS CEBU SHOWROOM

With the Volvo Cebu showroom newly unveiled in Mandaue City in Cebu, a dynamic fleet of Volvo cars will now be available to the local market.

The Cebu showroom was opened with a *Surprisingly Volvo* event that revolved around the fresh, new look and outlook of Volvos. Gone were the boxy edges and instead replaced by sleek lines and even sexier curves of the Swedish automotive fleet. Spearheading the pack is three of the most vibrant models available: the nimble Volvo S40 compact sedan, the sporty Volvo S60 and the robust Volvo XC70 Cross Country. These models pack a mighty punch with varying degrees of horsepower that leave other cars in the dust. Not to mention the innovative design and thoughtful touches that spell out style and substance at the same time. Of course, being a Volvo, these cars carry the same concern for nature with its cutting-edge environmental and safety technologies.

In May 2005, PAMOCOR inked the deal with Viking Cars, Incoporated (VCI), the local distributor and authorized dealer of Volvo cars in the country. PAMOCOR's vision to be one of the top automotive manufacturers in the country has inspired the people behind the corporation to work together and pool their ideas to build a company that creates a customer-oriented product. It has now ventured further in offering the premium-car buying public a strong and dependable brand of cars -- Volvo.

With a 700 sq. m, 3-level office building, a fully-equipped customer service center, a 600-sq. m. parking space and secured backside warehouse capable of storing a fleet of cars, PAMOCOR is confident to cater to the needs of Volvo clients in the region. With a showroom anchored on Scandinavian design, Volvo creates an environment that is as relaxing and rewarding as being behind the wheel of their cars. The experience inside the showroom features a line-up of cars that create space to give people an insight into each model's distinct character.

A lot more is in store for Cebu and other neighboring regions as Volvo rolls on to bring automotive excellence and customer service in this part of the country. Along with other offerings such as the pre-owned and accessory facilities, Volvo buyers have more options to enjoy their decision to purchase a Volvo. VCI supports and expresses confidence in PAMOCOR that with its usual dedication to excellence, it will thus push forward and strengthen the Volvo brand in the Queen City of the South.

Head on to the newly unveiled Volvo Cebu and testdrive stylishly safe and sleek Volvos today.

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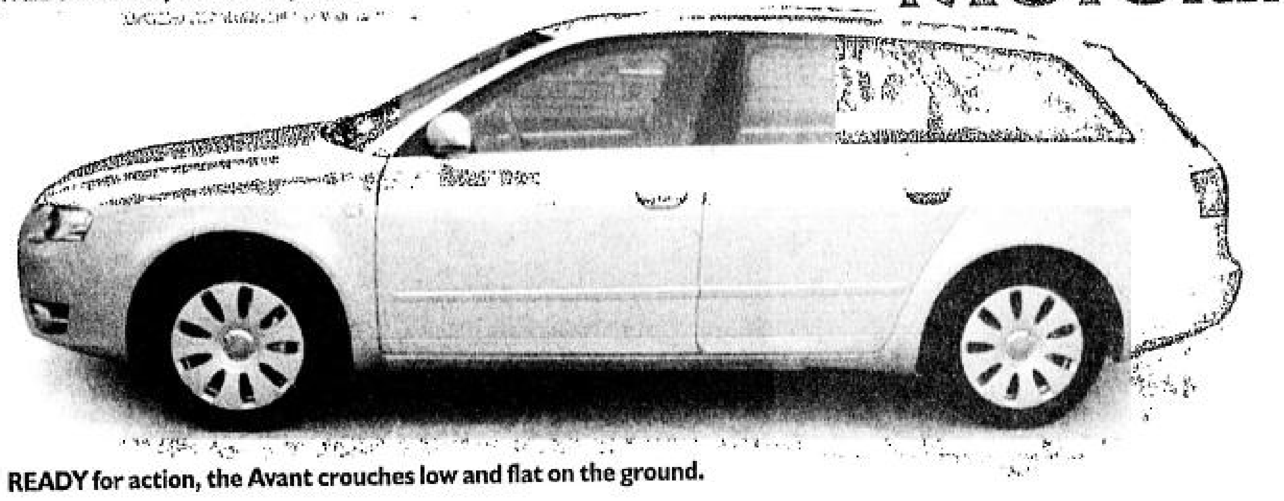


READY for action, the Avant crouches low and flat on the ground.

The amazing Audi A4 Avant

ON THE ROAD

Mendoza

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT the Audi A4 Avant 2.0 TDI that suggests athletic power even when it is standing still. The Avant is a station wagon, but look how low and flat it crouches on the ground, as if ready to leap into action at any moment. Notice how prominent and muscular its sculpted shoulders and flanks are. And when it faces you, how the subtly menacing big-mouth front grille with Audi's signature four interlocking rings grabs your attention.

Is this how a family-friendly station wagon should impress you? Yes, if it is an Audi and the buyer in mind, although he/she heads a family, enjoys driving high-performance cars.

What is amazing about the Avant 2.0 TDI is that it is powered by a 2.0-liter, DOHC turbodiesel direct injection engine capable of 140 hp/4000 rpm and 320 Nm/1750-2500 rpm max torque; yet its declared average fuel consumption (highway and city driving combined) is approximately 17 km per liter.

Full tank

Audi's fuel-efficiency claim checks out. I drove a full-tanked (about 70 liters) Avant TDI a total distance of 289 km over several days, yet the fuel gauge indicated that only one-fourth of the fuel was consumed. In other words, I averaged 16.5 km per liter although I once hit 200 kph on the traffic-free Skyway.

The Avant 2.0 TDI sprints from zero to 100 kph in 9.7 seconds and its top speed is 212 kph. Not as quick as a BMW 3 Series perhaps but hey, not bad for a 2.0-liter diesel wagon. By the way, the Avant is the only diesel wagon currently on the market. The Chevrolet (actually a Daewoo) Optra wago, Volvo V50 and Peugeot 807 are gasoline-fed while the Chevrolet (actually an Opel) Zafira and Opel Astra wagon, both also gasoline-fueled, are no longer sold.

Audi's Multitronic continuously variable automatic transmission contributes to the fun of driving the Avant. You can choose the manual shift option with seven forward speeds or the six-speed automatic, either the fuel-economical "D" (Drive) or free-revving, closer gear-ratio "S" (Sport). Whatever mode you select, the electronically managed acceleration is smooth and swift, although the diesel powerplant does get a bit noisy at times.

Handling

Audi cars are renowned for their sporty handling and in this aspect the Avant delivers handsomely. Caroming through bends or speeding down straights, the turbocharged Avant stays glued to the road with steering precision and superlative riding comfort to boot. Credit goes to the suitably weighted steering, a dynamically calibrated chassis consisting of a four-link front suspension with electro-hydraulic steering and the independent wheel, trapezoidal-link rear suspension. Double-tube gas-filled shock absorbers, coil springs, rebound buffer springs and flexibly mounted axle supports fore and aft with extra-large dampers guarantee premium ride quality.

The cast aluminum wheels are shod with 205/55 R16 Continental tires and equipped with front/rear disc brakes. Aside from a diagonally split dual-circuit braking system, the Electronic Stabilization Program with sensors (ESP 8.0), which includes Electronic Differential Lock, Anti-Slip Regulation, EBD, hydraulic brake assist and ABS, ensures superb braking power and steering control in any situation.

Safety

The A4 is complete in terms of safety features, what with 2-stage front airbags, sideguard head airbags, separate chest/pelvis side airbags for driver, front passenger and rear seats, 3-point safety belts for all seats with belt force limiters and active head restraints in front aside from an extremely strong body structure and impact-absorbing crumple zones.

Inside, the Avant A4 never lets you forget that you are driving a premium car. The Avant TDI's elegant interior includes leather upholstery and trim, multifunction leather steering wheel with gearshift paddle switches and cruise control, power front seats with 4-way lumbar support, dual-control aircon, automatically dimming exterior and interior mirrors, aluminum finish silver inlays, a "Symphony" audio with integrated 6-disc CD changer and 10 loudspeakers, The remote control keyless entry, engine immobilizer and rear parking sensors add to the ambience of security.

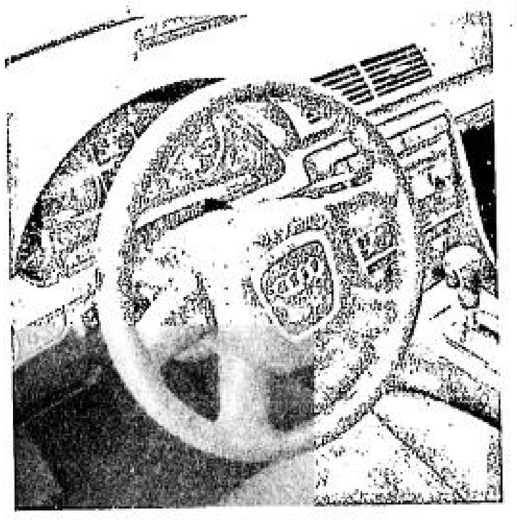
Cargo

The Avant's twin-loading cargo floor with tray underneath is easy to clean and has a removable luggage compartment cover and partition net. The cargo area increases from 442 to 1,364 liters when the rear seats are folded flat. On the other hand, leg room is tight for rear seat occupants.

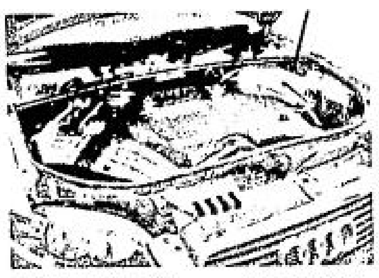
Summing up, the A4 Avant 2.0 TDI is amazing because it efficiently delivers high performance at very low fuel consumption. All the rest—sporty styling, complete safety features, superior handling, comfortable ride and classy cabin—are givens because this is an Audi and it costs P2.995 million.

* * *

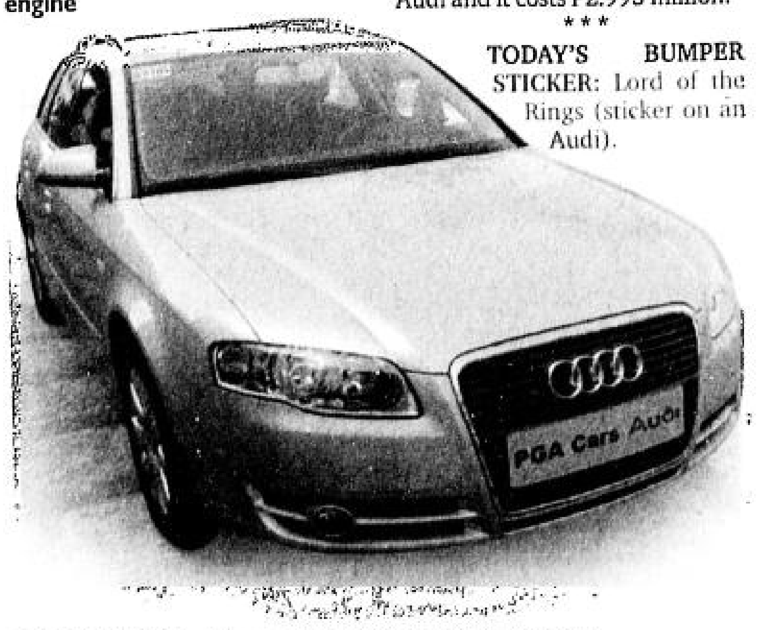
TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Lord of the Rings (sticker on an Audi).



INSIDE THE AVANT'S cockpit



THE AVANT'S powerful 2.0 TDI engine



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			12**	18**	24**	36	48	60
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Sentra 1.6 GSX MT	730,000	73,000	30,417	20,278	15,208	11,356	9,125	8,030
Sentra 1.6 GSX AT	770,000	77,000	32,083	21,389	16,042	11,978	9,625	8,470
Sentra 1.6 GS AT	815,000	81,500	33,958	22,639	16,979	12,678	10,188	8,965
X-TRAIL 200 4x2	1,140,000	114,000	47,500	31,667	23,750	17,733	14,250	12,540
X-TRAIL 200X 4x4	1,250,000	125,000	52,083	34,722	26,042	19,444	15,625	13,750
X-TRAIL 250X 4x4	1,360,000	136,000	56,667	37,778	28,333	21,156	17,000	14,960

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Fun rally and treasure hunt to mark AAP diamond jubilee

THE AUTOMOTIVE Association Philippines (AAP), the country's oldest and most respected auto club, will hold a "Fun Rally and Treasure Hunt" on Sunday, April 30, as part of the many colorful activities to mark its diamond jubilee celebration.

The Fun Rally and Treasure Hunt is open to all AAP members, rallying and nonrallying drivers, different car club members, media personalities, car manufacturers, families and friends.

Fuel certificates will be provided to participants courtesy of Petron Extra Unleaded while official rally shirts will be provided by Veridium Technology.

More fun

AAP officials said the inclusion of an adventure race-like treasure hunt will provide more fun and excitement for the participants.

The AAP, formerly known as the Philippine Motor Association, is in the forefront of servicing motorists and acting as the conduit and catalyst between the government and the automotive industry.

It is the affiliate of the Federation Internationale de l' Automobile (FIA) in the Philippines and as such carries the mandate to promote mobility and motor sports.

Other events

Apart from the fun rally, the AAP's 75th anniversary celebrations include a Vintage Card Motorcade (May 7); a 4x4 Competition (May 13) at the Boom grounds; and the Denso Karting Championship at Kart Trak (May 14), also at the Boom grounds; and the AAP Autocross (May 14) at the PICC Secretariat parking.

The first AAP Auto Show, meanwhile, will be held at the PICC Forum from May 12 to 14.

Major sponsors for the auto show include Petron Corp., Sustagen Premium, Toyota Motors Philippines Inc., Denso, Top Gear, NU107, 105.1 Crossover, Lipovitan and Aqua Soft.

The weeklong celebration will also feature the Alternative Fuels Conference on May 8, also at the PICC Forum.

Volvo XC70 named Best Luxury SUV of the year

THE ROBUST 2.5L Volvo XC70 Cross Country bested other competitors in its category when it was named Best Luxury SUV in the recently held Car Awards Night. The award was given by the esteemed Car Awards Group Inc.

This 5-speed Geartronic Volvo packs 210 horses and 320 ft/lb of torque and guarantees maximum performance.

An eye-catching new front grille adds character while new headlamps make the XC70 even sportier. Three-split rear seats, trip computer, water-repellant side-view mirror and that formidable face convey an all-or-nothing approach to detail.

The Volvo XC70 is even easier to own with the latest ownership package available: 30 percent down payment, 24 months to pay, at 0 percent interest.

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Model	SRP	Low D/P	24 mos.	36 mos.	48 mos.	60 mos.
Adventure GLX Gas	733,000	89,950	30,491	21,729	17,389	14,969
Adventure GLX Diesel	763,000	66,450	31,739	22,618	18,100	15,582
Adventure GLS Sport Gas M/T	830,000	84,500	34,526	24,604	19,690	16,950
Adventure GLS Sport Gas A/T	883,000	112,450	36,731	26,175	20,947	18,032
Adventure GLS Sport Diesel (7&9 seater)	830,000	79,500	34,526	24,604	19,690	16,950
Adventure Super Sport Diesel Std.	871,000	120,650	36,231	25,820	20,662	17,787

50% D/P	12 mos.	18 mos.	24mos.	36 mos.	48 mos.	60 mos.
366,500	**30,542**	21,291	17,004	12,117	9,697	8,348
381,500	**31,792**	**21,194**	15,896	11,711	9,371	8,067
415,000	**34,583**	**23,056**	18,445	13,145	10,519	9,055
441,500	37,833	25,894	20,674	14,733	11,790	10,150
415,000	**34,583**	**23,056**	**17,292**	12,978	10,386	8,941
435,500	38,174	26,127	20,847	14,856	11,889	10,234

- *Figures in bold represent ZERO Interest Plans.* • *All plans subject to bank approval.*

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Your 2bU! guide to a fabulous summer

Don't let the summer months fly by without doing anything worthwhile. In this issue, we have different summer guides to aid you in having the best summer of your life. We have tips on going on a road trip with friends, enjoying comedy in the city, achieving your summer glow, unleashing your inner photographer, releasing the writer in you, finding your new age self and more. Have an eventful summer!

to be young • to be you • to be young • to be you • To be you!

Get busy

Compiled by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

SURE, SUMMER IS A GREAT TIME FOR some serious rest and relaxation, but don't go too far. Vacation time is also the best time to improve oneself through seminars and workshops. Here are some of them.

Join Merk's Bar Bistro's "Merkland: Theater by Children," which offers theater, acting, singing, reading and storytelling workshops. There are 12 sessions per class and a culminating activity on May 26. Fee is P4,500 per student plus P500 production cost. E-mail mail@merkbarbistro.com for more details.

ABS-CBN is offering summer courses from May 8-26. Courses available are acting, voice lessons, musical theater, modeling and projection, image enhancement, digital photography, speech and oral declamation, jazz funk, street dance, practical self-defense, cinematic wushu, jiu-jitsu and muay thai. Call 4153828 or 4169366 or e-mail workshops@abs-cbn.pinoycentral.com

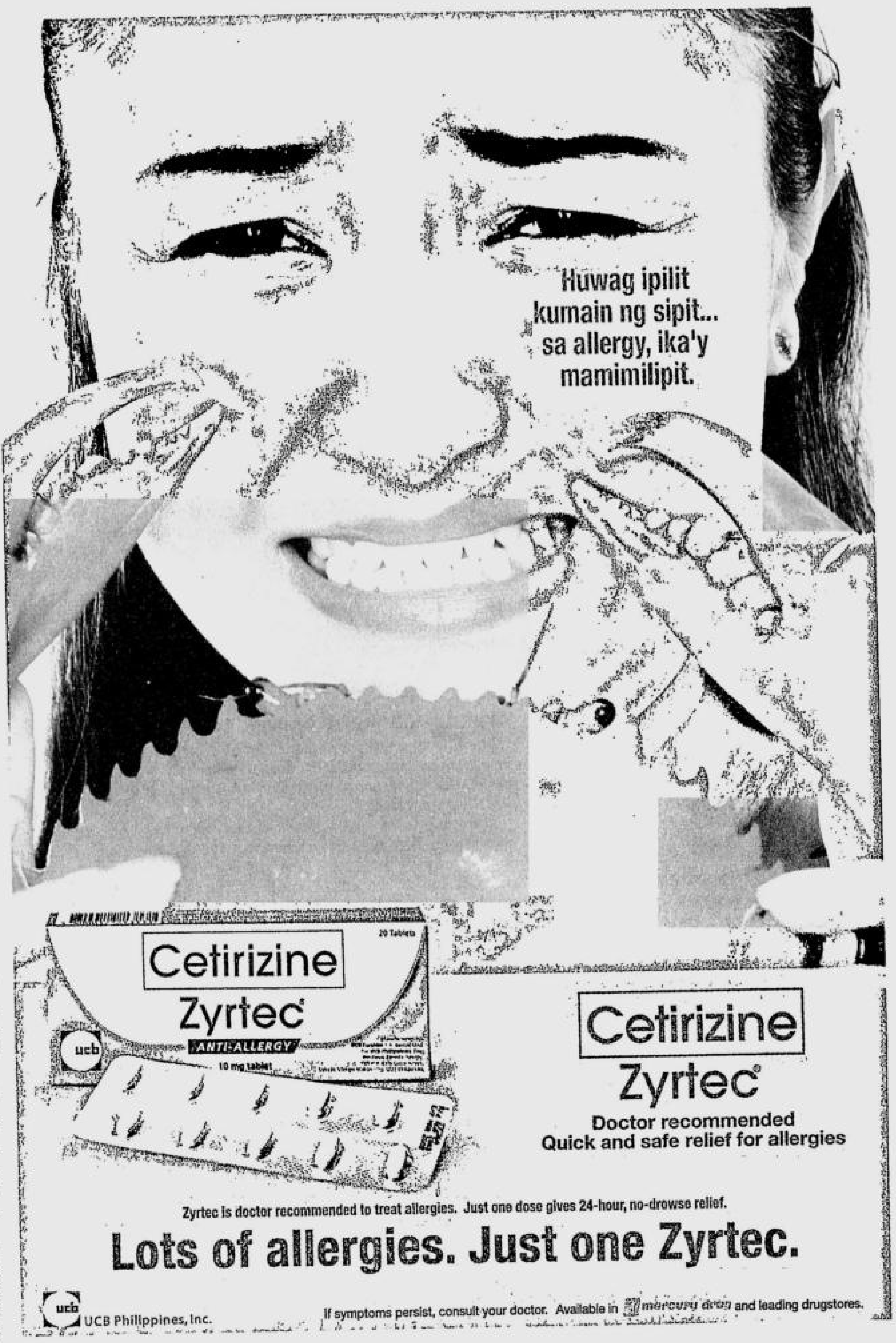
The RJ Academy of Music offers courses on acoustic/classical guitar, lead/bass, drums, voice and keyboard. Rate is P4,500 for 12 lessons, and P9,000 for 24 lessons. Call RJ's Robinsons Galleria branch at 6358142 and 6359275.

John Robert Powers is holding summer workshops on personality development, acting, modeling, etiquette and grooming. Call 8929511 or 9270465.

Ayala Museum's summer workshops include drawing, painting and arts and crafts, for young adults aged 13-17. Adult art classes are for those 18 and up. Practical and applied arts courses include jewelry making, mosaic making and book arts. Call 7577117 to 21 loc. 29 or e-mail workshops@ayalamuseum.org

Parents and preschoolers as well as early elementary teachers may want to join Adarna's summer workshops on beginning reading (May 13, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.). The workshop will be held at Raya School (73-A Scout Limbaga

GET/ C2



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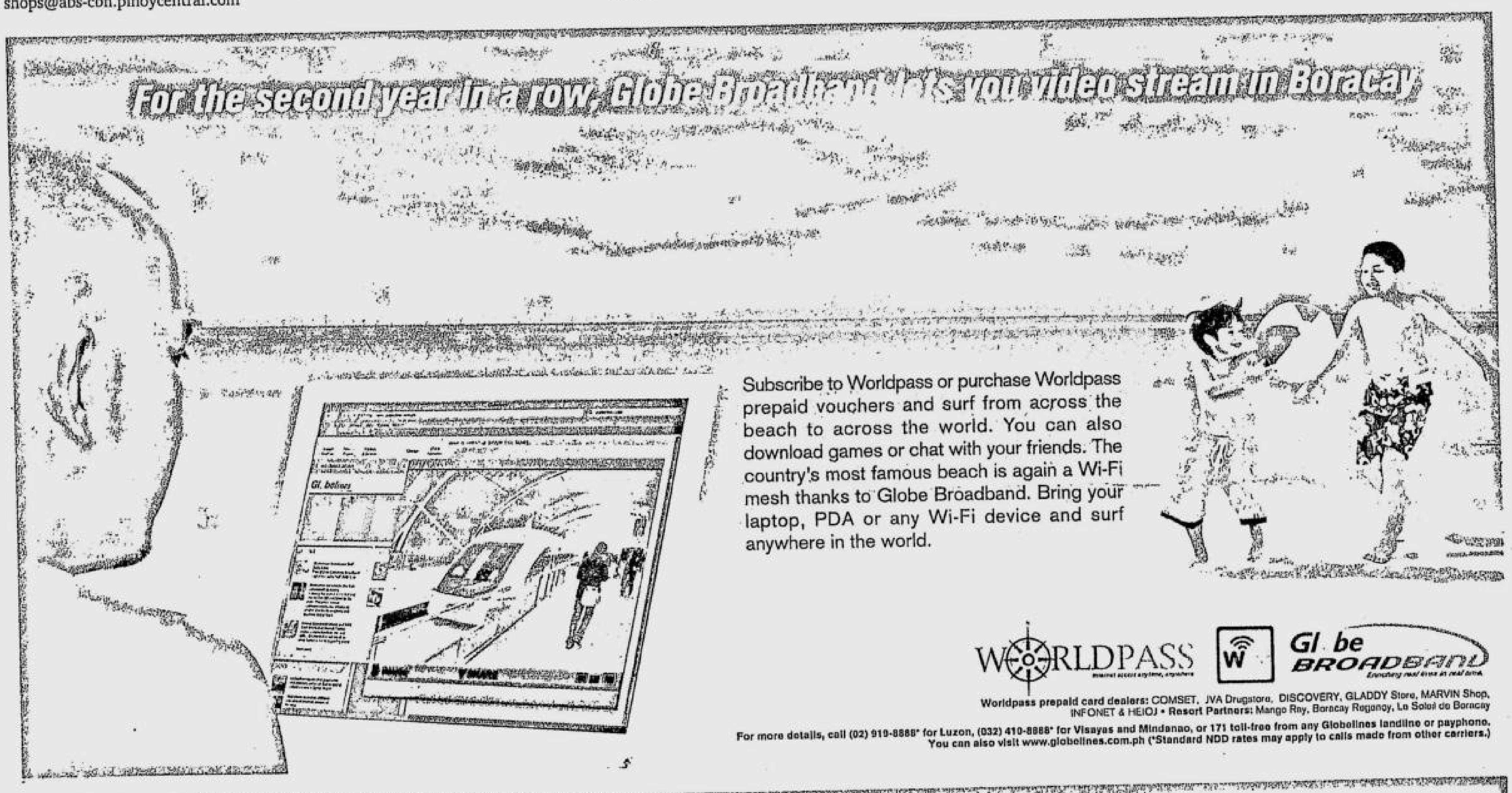

For the second year in a row, Globe Broadband lets you video stream in Boracay

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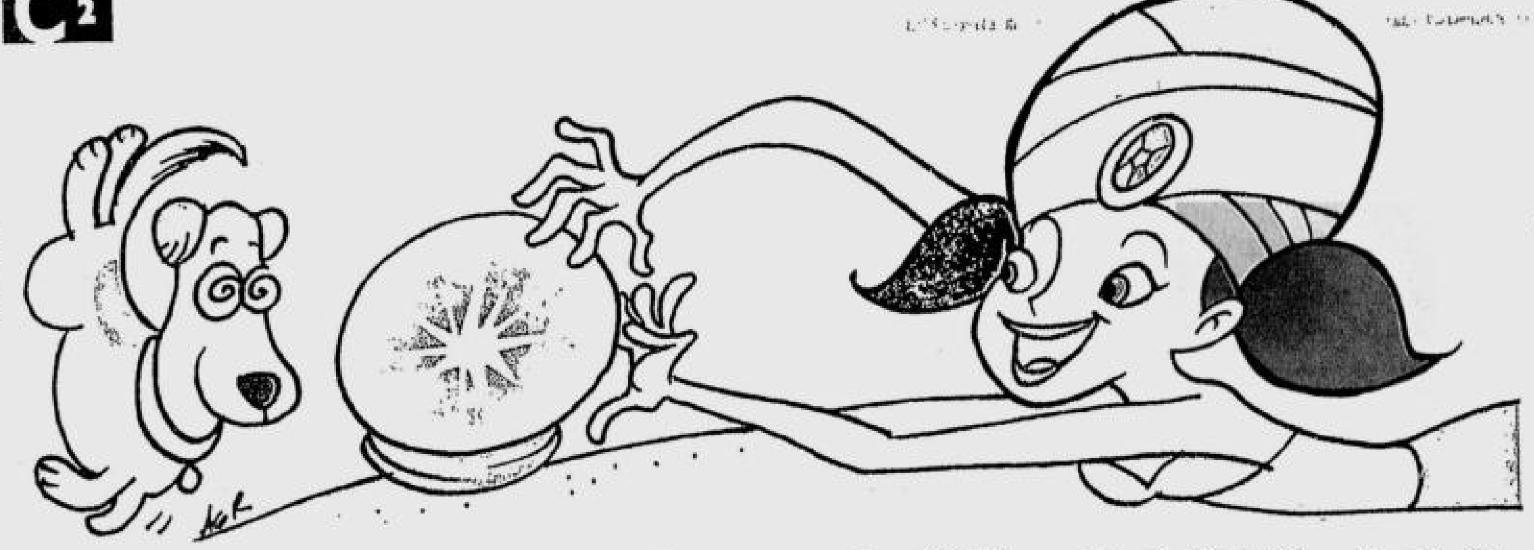

LET THE SUNSHINE IN

By Danicar Mariano
2bU! Correspondent

RUMI, THE SUFI MYSTIC POET, SAYS, "There are a hundred ways to kneel and kiss the ground."

This summer, expand those ways. Listen to your hundred secret voices. Learn new, creative and profound paths to prayer. Return and pay tribute to your source. Develop a personal experience with the universal unconscious. Be aware of skills buried within you all along. Know that foresight is nothing but insight to a past, present and future. Discover the power of empathy and what it has to offer. See and sense energy while vibrating to a higher consciousness.

Welcome to your new-age summer guide.

You have the incense, the bath salts, the crystals. You prefer herbal tea than coffee. You know that OBE is an out-of-body experience and ESP is not something women have before their periods. You know the astral plane is not something that is faster than the Concorde. You know the yin yang is more than that symbol from "Karate Kid," and channeling is not just switching TV stations.

You may have even heard of Jaime Licauco, Tony Perez and the Spirit Questors. You've had your fill of "magical experiences" that are too good to be coincidental. You're even planning to buy that crystal ball from Quiapo. Let's ask what summer has in store to quench the hunger of seekers like you.

Hypnosis and hypnotherapy

Workshops on hypnosis and hypnotherapy are being offered by Ateneo's psychology department, with topics that include age and past-life regression, automatic writing, hand levitation, astral travel, spirit of the coin, reading the crystal ball, using the astral rod and, of course, healing. It is a very experiential course facilitated by Fr. Bulatao S.J., Ph.D, a multi-awarded Jesuit teacher and previous president of the Psychological Association of the Philippines.

The workshop is held Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 3:30-6 p.m., until May 31. Call 4266001 local 5260.

Reading hidden meanings

Since New Age is all about looking into yourself to discover clues left by the divine, many seekers are inclined to believe in hidden meanings left in the stars, in tarot cards, or in our hands and faces.

There are tarot cards available in Power-Books and A Different Bookstore, complete with manuals, as well as books on palmistry. To learn how to read tarot cards, call 0917-8944672.

Listen to your hundred secret voices. Or learn new, creative and profound paths to prayer

Merriam Webster Bookstore in Riverbanks, Marikina, has a book on how to read faces, and dream interpretation journals. Since summer vacation is the best time to get that well-deserved rest, why not make an adventure out of sleeping by learning to interpret your dreams?

Survey as many New Age books as you can, but remember, as Sam Keen says in "Hymns to an Unknown God," "always keep your spiritual bullsh*t detector turned on." Be discerning and keep your common sense.

Crystals for healing, crystal balls for fortune telling, candles of various shapes and sizes as well as amulets, oils and herbs for various rituals are all available in Quiapo.

'Chakras' and 'pranic' healing

There is an ancient belief that says we are enveloped in energy fields, with specific energy centers called *chakra* distributed up and down our spines.

According to Lourdes Ramos, who is offering a *chakra* therapy course under the psychology department of Ateneo, "*chakras* are also symbolic energy patterns of past conditioning which govern our behavioral tendencies. Any imbalances within and among the *chakras* may manifest as physical, emotional, mental and or spiritual difficulties."

Other institutions that offer Chakra Therapy, Pranic Healing and Aura Reading are Earth Haven (tel. 9283250), Sarilaya Alternative Healing Center (0919-8985932), and the World Pranic Healing Foundation with office in Medical City, Ortigas.

Meditation is becoming more popular as we realize the importance of balancing the emotional, psychological, spiritual as well as physical aspects of our lives. Brahma Kumaris fosters meditation and personality analysis through its life goal talks and retreat-like seminars. Call 9229231.

Mind-body balance

Alternative healing need not be alternative. Since New Agers aspire for balance, taking care of and loving the body is of prime importance. Likha Diwa is an organic restaurant in Gulod, CP Garcia near UP Diliman, serving unique meals geared for natural health and wellness.

Nurture Spa in Tagaytay also offers holistic therapy wellness sessions under a renowned clinical psychologist. Learning to relax, after all, is crucial to reaching higher states of consciousness. Call Fiesta Pacific Travel and Tours for details.

With mind-body balance being crucial to New Agers, movement and exercises also follow suit. Moving meditations like tai chi, qui gong, yoga and other exercises that promise not only to keep you fit but also heighten your spirituality are considered worthwhile activities.

Yoga classes are held every Tuesday and Fridays at the Ateneo P.E. department. Call 4266001.

Artistic expression

New Age recognizes the importance of artistic expression and imagination. Discover your "inner goddess" through a women empowerment writing workshop under Aida Santos, wherein participants are taught to write from the body. Sensual and erotic writing is one of the segments of this very intimate workshop, as well as the art of journaling and self-reflection. Call 0919-6070015.

Travel to a higher consciousness

What would any New Age summer guide be without nature trips? After all, it is a belief system founded on the premise that the divine is found everywhere, especially in mother nature. As the Gnostic gospel of Thomas says: "The kingdom of God is inside you and all around you. Break a piece of rock and I am there. Split a piece of stone and I am with you."

Climbing a mountain is one such mystical experience. Fortunately for us, the Philippines is blessed with many mountains. A trip to Sagada, Mt. Apo or Mt. Makiling could prove to be very meaningful experiences.

One of the more popular mystical mountain destinations is Mt. Banahaw. Residents there dwell in a culture reminiscent of our pre-colonial *babaylan* tradition with a woman as head of the community. The mountain also hosts many faith healers.

With proper attitude, going to beaches can also be a spiritual experience. Swimming in salt water purifies our aura and being buried in sand rejuvenates our energy. Or why not swim with whale sharks in Donsol, Sorsogon? The experience, so they say, is amazing and transcendental. Call Fiesta Pacific Travel and Tours, 0917-8812882 or 0919-2419131.

Say 'hot!' A su

Compiled by Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

IT'S SUMMER, WHICH means plenty of time and plenty of light that's perfect for photography. It is a time when you can actually go around and explore.

Summer is also a time when you can take creative workshops, feast your eyes on creative exhibits, take city tours and attend fiestas across the country. In all of this, take your camera along.

Here are some suggestions so you can flex your photography muscles this summer.

1. View an exhibit.

Photographs by Wawi Navarozza and Julius Clar, April 27-May 11

Fine art prints and photographs by Bencab, Virgillio Aviado, Wig Tysmans, Nap Jamir, Bien Bautista, Neal Oshima, May 15-June 3

Both exhibits at One Workshop
G/F, La Fuerza Plaza II, Don Chino Roces Ave and Sabio St., Makati City
Call 8192074; telefax 8105094; visit www.oneworkshop.net

Workshop on photojournalism by Cheryl P. Ravelo, Aaron Favila and Mike Alquinto, May 12-14
Café Ischia
Boracay Beach Club, Balabag
E-mail newsrepublic23@yahoo.com

"J@X : Ten Years of Jay Alonzo," April 4-29

"Noon at Ngayon," an exhibit of the winners of the nationwide photo competition on Philippine architectural landmarks over time, May 10-31
The Alcove Photo Gallery
Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Avenue and Ayala Triangle, Makati City

"1017 Photographs," a group exhibit of 60 photographs taken during the State of National Emergency last Feb
The Oarhouse
1803 A. Mabini St., Malate, M
Visit www.oarhouse.blogspo

"Filipinas," an exhibit of int traits of 30 women from the ar tion, social work, civil society tics, photographed by Isa Loren rated by Deanna Ongpin-Recto until May 8
Kawilihan Gallery
University of the Philippines Quezon City
Call 8323702; visit www sphoto.com/filipinas/

2. Join a workshop.

1st Photography Expediti shop 2006 , a photo worksho of Sagada in the footsteps of th ter documentary photographe Masferre. Lecturers and facili Alex Baluyut, Jimmy A. Don Nartea, Dave Leprozo Jr.
May 13 (Raw File Images Gal daluyong City)
May 17-20 (Sagada Guesth ferre Inn and Gallery Sagada, Province)
Call 5313823 or e-m file@gmail.com; visit www.ph tion.blogspot.com
Package cost is P15,000 only.

Basic photography with Navasero
With Eric Torres as guest lec en Saturdays, 2-5 p.m. Subjec digital/manual camera opera composition, light, line, textu and objects, photojournalism ture, ongoing until May 28.
Call 0916-7060130.

Photojournalism workshop conducted by Cheryl Paz Reuters, Aaron Favila of Associ and Mike Alquinto of Europ Agency, May 12-14
Casa Pilar Beach Resort, B

The v

What does it tak to get published For starters, rea absorb and get that pen movin

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

THE TRUTH IS, THERE ARE A LOT OF young aspiring writers—a lot more than publications can absorb. At the same time, however, a lot of companies also look for fresh talent every day. While it does take a certain amount of luck to get published, most of it really involves hard work and perseverance on the writer's end.

What does it take to get published? Make sure your stuff is polished, and, when you're confident about your writing, send your sample work to editors.

Or, you can do the following:

Take workshops

To be completely honest, a lot of writers think they're a lot better than they really are. Writing workshops will help them get an outsider's perspective of their work. Usually, workshops are moderated by an experienced authority so the feedback writers receive from their peers will be constructive.

While workshops—online workshops, for instance—without moderators end up being either overly negative (too much bashing) or positive (some groups coddle each other), you could give them a try. Some schools offer summer workshops. If yours doesn't, try applying for the annual writers' workshops like Sillim UP's.

Practice writing exercises

So you can't join a workshop y more pieces on your own in ord ish your style and voice. Blog, j rum, write short stories and ess anything to get that pen movin sound natural, and avoid using pompous words that don't real anything, unless you want to so tentious.

Try to set a goal. When yo working on a deadline, writing i put off. Do not wait for inspir these moments rarely come an they do, you're usually about to are in the bathtub or doing so equally inconvenient. If you ca write one piece a week. Doing so help build your portfolio, so y something to submit just in case asks for it.

Get busy

From page C1

St., QC). Call 3723548 loc. 110 or e-mail events@adarna.com.ph

Trumpets will hold its annual summer workshops in its new workshop venue at AFP Theater, apart from its venues at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall and Alabang Town Center. There will be workshops on musical theater, voice, modeling, street dancing, public speaking and hosting. This year also marks the second year of Summer Stock, an advanced musical theater class handled in a semi-professional environment where students also get to produce a major play. Call 6362842 or 6354478.

The University of the Philippines Film Institute is holding film and digital production workshops. Upcoming topics include black-and-white photography (May 1-6), basic non-linear editing (May 8-13), alternative scriptwriting (May 8-13), art and animation (May 15-27) and cinematography for digital filmmaking (May 29, 30, 31, June 1, 2 and 3). Call 9263640 or 9262722 (Laisa) or e-mail bjorki71@yahoo.com

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Book signing with the "Bad Boy"

HERE'S SOMETHING FOR ALL BASKETBALL fans. The undisputed "bad boy" of the NBA, Dennis Rodman, will be signing copies of his latest book, "I Should be Dead By Now," at the Fully Booked Gateway branch in Cubao on April 30, 2 p.m.-5 p.m.

DENNIS RODMAN
I SHOULD BE DEAD BY NOW

Dennis Rodman is arriving in Manila as part of his Bad Boy basketball tour. He and a group of former NBA players will be taking on our very own Philippine National basketball team at the Araneta Coliseum on May 1.

There are 500 exclusive copies of the 220-page hardcover book, which will be released for the first time in the Philippines since it was published late last year. "I Should be Dead by Now" will be available for sale in all Fully Booked branches by April 29 at P1,399.

Those who purchase a book are guaranteed to have their copy autographed by the NBA star. (Please note that Rodman will only be signing his book.) Gateway Mall opens its doors at 10 a.m.

Summer glowin'

From page C4

line brightens the skin visibly, but don't worry about causing your hard-earned tan to fade. In fact, using the proper whitening (or brightening) products before you go out into the sun will give you a more even tan, provided you slather on ample amounts of sunscreen. If you don't use sunscreen, you'll simply burn faster.

Hairy issues

Swimming can be potentially dangerous to your crowning glory. Whether it's salt water or chlorine, taking that dip entails a lot more trouble for your hair than you think. Sure, naturally sun-lightened hair looks cool, but when your hair becomes dry and brittle, the surfer-girl look suddenly doesn't seem that great.

However, aside from being ugly, swimming caps are hot and uncomfortable. Instead, go for hair-saving products that prevent or treat hair damage.

Kerastase Soleil's line of shampoo, hair masks and protective sprays provides the most luxurious treatments for sun-damaged hair, while Tigi Bed Head's Manipulator shampoo and conditioner set smells like coconuts and fruit cocktails. Kerastase, in particular, deep-conditions and smoothens hair from the root, so you won't have to worry about immediate damage control after swimming.

Also, check out Schwarzkopf's professional hair care and styling products, which don't leave product buildup even when you use them everyday. For party nights, mist your hair with Tigi Catwalk's Camera Ready shine spray, which can give even the most damaged hair some serious shine.

Want to try a new hairdo for the summer? Louis Kee of Salon de Ken works wonders. Check out Salon de Ken at Glass Tower Building, G/F, C. Palanca St., Legaspi Village, Makati (8928352/848-1886).

Fruit cocktail colors

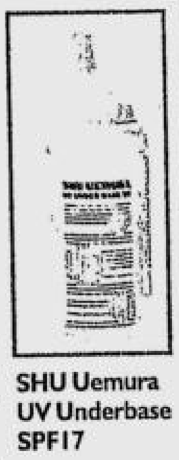
While summer is not the best time for heavy makeup, it doesn't mean you can't wear any, either. Many Filipinas avoid foundation like the plague, but foundation can cover up imperfections and even out skin tone, provided we go for the right shade.

According to Kakuyasu Uchiide, chief makeup artist of Shu Uemura International, there's no need to wear foundation on your entire face; apply it only on areas you need. Again, the right shade is crucial—to make sure, blend it on your jaw and check if the color disappears into your skin. This season, avoid heavy creams, powder and pancake formulas, as they have a tendency to become chalky as the heat rises.

Go for liquid, gel or mousse formulas and top off with a light dusting of loose powder to set the makeup. Shu Uemura UV Underbase is a tinted primer with SPF17 and can be used under other foundations in order to make them last longer. L'Oreal Sheer Cashmere and Maybelline Clear Smooth Gel or Dream Matte Mousse are also good formulas for the season.

Summer is also the best time to experiment with color. Bright hues such as pink, orange, yellow, blue and green look great paired with softer neutrals. You don't have to use the whole color palette on your eyelids. Just line your peepers with a bright pencil (try Shu Uemura eye light pencil in yellow/blue), sweep on some blush and lip gloss, and you're set.

Try L'Oreal's Colorjuice lip glosses, which taste as yummy as they look, and pair them with the delicious-smelling Blush Delice (Fresh Papaya and Pink Grapefruit look great on Filipina skin tones). Be sure to check out Shu Uemura's Summer 2006 palette, which contains one blue and two amber eyeshadows, and a coral-pink blush. MAC's Culturebloom collection, meanwhile, inspired by the English countryside, has bright floral-inspired eyeshadows and blushes. This season also saw the return of false lashes, although it might be wise to limit them to parties and not beaches.



SHU Uemura UV Underbase SPF17

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Workshops

Some brands hold workshops once in a while so customers can familiarize themselves with their products. Ask your favorite counter managers or call Rustan's at 8442451 to ask which brands have upcoming events. You may even score some freebies if you attend.

You can also sit down with one of the counter managers and ask them how to apply certain products. They will only be too happy to help you. Asking a couple of questions can save you from buying a product that does not suit you, or will use only once in a while.

Those who want to make a career out of beauty can enroll in a makeup school to learn formal makeup application. The Center for Aesthetic Studies Manila, managed by Frank Provost (8970383), offers regular lessons on basic and advanced makeup techniques. It also sells professional-quality makeup brushes at reasonable prices, so if you want to spend P5,000 on a set and not just one brush, give the Center a call.

Makeup mavens might also want to get a copy of the May issue of Marie Claire magazine, which features the Prix d'Excellence de la Beaute (beauty awards) in order to check out the latest and the greatest in the beauty business

E-mail the author at biancacon sunji@yahoo.com

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Food-photo trip, a one-day photographic and gastronomic tour of Laguna and Quezon to be conducted by Jay Alonzo, May 6, 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

Call Filipinas Heritage Library, 8921801.

Workshop fee is P3,000.

Digital Photography 101: Photography and the Computer workshop by Jay Alonzo, May 22, 23, 24, 29 and 30, 6-9 p.m.

Call Filipinas Heritage Library.

Workshop fee is P3,500.

Kids and Camera, a photography for kids workshop by Rey Ferbandos, May 27, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Call Filipinas Heritage Library.

Workshop fee is P2,500.

Lighting for portrait photography by Jay Alonzo, April 22-23, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Call Filipinas Heritage Library

Workshop fee is P4,000.

Black-and-white photography workshop, May 1-6, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

University of the Philippines Film Institute

Diliman, Quezon City

Call 9263640, 9262722.

Workshop fee is P7,500.

Basic photography workshop by Jun Miranda, April 18-20

Philippine Center for Creative Imaging

2/F, Kodak Bldg. 2247 Pasong Tamo, Makati City

Call 7593087; fax 8925281; e-mail inquiry@pcci.com.ph; visit http://pcci.com.ph

Workshop fee is P6,400 +VAT.

Commercial product photography workshop by Ibarra Deri, May 1-2

Philippine Center for Creative Imaging

Workshop fee is P4,800.

Wedding photography workshop by Patrick Uy, May 29-30

Philippine Center for Creative Imaging

Workshop fee is P4,800.

Celebrity-glamour portrait photography by Dominique James, May 20-21

Philippine Center for Creative Imaging

Workshop fee is P5,000.

RTW and haute couture fashion photography by Dominique James, April 29-30

Philippine Center for Creative Imaging

Workshop fee is P5,000.

3. Take a photo trip.

Celdran Tours by Carlos Celdran

Contact at 0926-2597506; e-mail celdrantours@hotmail.com; visit http://www.celdrantours.blogspot.com

Marikina City Tour by Mario Villanueva, city tourism officer

Call 9346784; visit http://www.marikina.gov.ph/pages/citygov/departments/tourism.jsp

Quezon province festivals:

Zarzuela sa Infanta, 3rd week of April
Mayohan sa Tayabas, May 12-15
Pahiyas sa Lucban, May 15
Pasayahan sa Lucena, May 26-30
Balwarte sa Gumaca, May 15

Visit http://www.discoverquezon.com/

4. Volunteer as a photography assistant.

Jake Verzosa, fashion, travel and documentary photographer

Send curriculum vitae and portfolio to jverzosa@gmail.com; visit http://jakee.blogspot.com

Daniel Tan, digital photographer

Send CV and portfolio to dtan_ph@yahoo.com

Visit www.photos.ph/dtan_ph; call 7132502 or 7132535 for more info

Blow Up Babies

E-mail CV and portfolio to info@blowupbabies.com; visit www.blowupbabies.com for more info

5. Join a photo contest.

Epson EPIX'06

Themes are "Vanishing Scenes" and "The Filipino Achiever"

Deadlines: April 29 (Metro Manila) and May 6 (province)

Visit http://www.epson-epix.com/about_epix06.html

Call 8105094; telefax 8192074

Panibagong Paraan 2006: Development with Equity Photo Competition

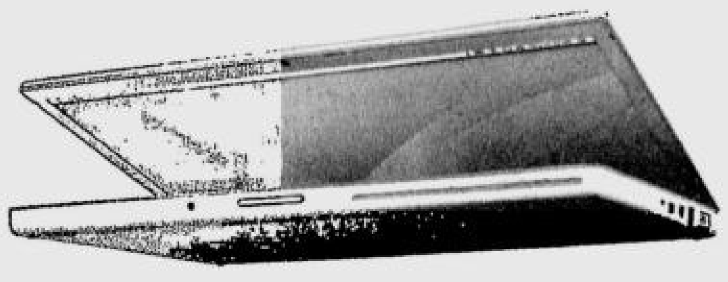
Entries must depict how equity issues are related to income and income opportunities, social services, assets, livelihood and natural resources

Deadline: April 30

Visit http://www.panibagong-paraan.com/ideas-photo.html

Call 9173047; e-mail dimp@worldbank.org

E-mail tammydavid@gmail.com



STEVE Jobs meets Bill Gates: Intel-based Mac computers can now run on the Microsoft operating system.

Windows on a Mac

By Beia Formoso
2bU! Contributor

THEY'VE FINALLY done it! Now you can run Windows on, of all things, a Mac computer!

On April 5, 2006, Apple introduced to the world Boot Camp, a public beta software that enables Intel-based Mac computers to run Windows XP. Boot Camp allows users with a Microsoft Windows XP installation disc to install Windows XP on either the new iMac, MacBook Pro Laptop or Mac Mini, and once installation is complete, users can restart their computer to run either the Mac OS X operating system or Windows XP operating system.

Says Walter Mossberg of Personal Technology from The Wall Street Journal, "That makes the iMac, the Mac Mini and the MacBook Pro Laptop the only computers in the world that allow mainstream users to run both operating systems at full speed... Whether you want to run Mac or Windows programs, an Apple computer may be the only computer you'll need."

"Apple has no desire or plan to sell or support Windows, but many customers have expressed their interest to run Windows on Apple's superior hardware now that we use Intel processors," said Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing. "We think Boot Camp makes the Mac even more appealing to Windows users considering making the switch."

The beauty of the software is that it makes it possible to switch between the Mac OS X and Windows XP operating systems easily, so now users can run programs that are really only available on the Windows operating system on their Mac computers. The presence of Intel processors inside the Mac hardware make for running Windows XP practically flawless and faster than in regular PCs, according to Mossberg.

Download Boot Camp for free at www.apple.com/macosx/bootcamp as a preview software licensed for use on a trial basis for a limited time. The final version of Boot Camp will be available as a feature in the upcoming Mac OS X version 10.5 "Leopard" that will be previewed at Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference in August.

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Read more

If you want to be a writer, you have to read. One of my professors, Charlene Fernandez, once told our class about a student who submitted a rather bad story about a boy who discovered that he was a wizard. Sounds familiar? She suggested that he read the Harry Potter series, but he refused because he didn't want to "taint his writing style by reading other books."

Not only will reading more books open your mind to new things, it will also help you discover what's been done and what sounds trite. It will also possibly save you from the unforgivable sin of plagiarism.

Read everything and anything that you can get your hands on—literary classics, short stories, poetry, stuff by local writers (you will learn a lot by reading them), and even pulp fiction, if you want. Be picky about the quality of the material you read, but don't sniff at unfamiliar genres and authors.

Join contests

Don't aim for the Palancas just yet if you're a beginner. Join school contests and essay competitions for starters. You can also aim at magazine and newspaper contests. You'll be competing against hundreds of people, so you have to write attention-catching stuff. Ever wonder why you never win prizes when you submit your entries to newspapers? Your piece probably wasn't remarkable. Put effort in everything you submit.

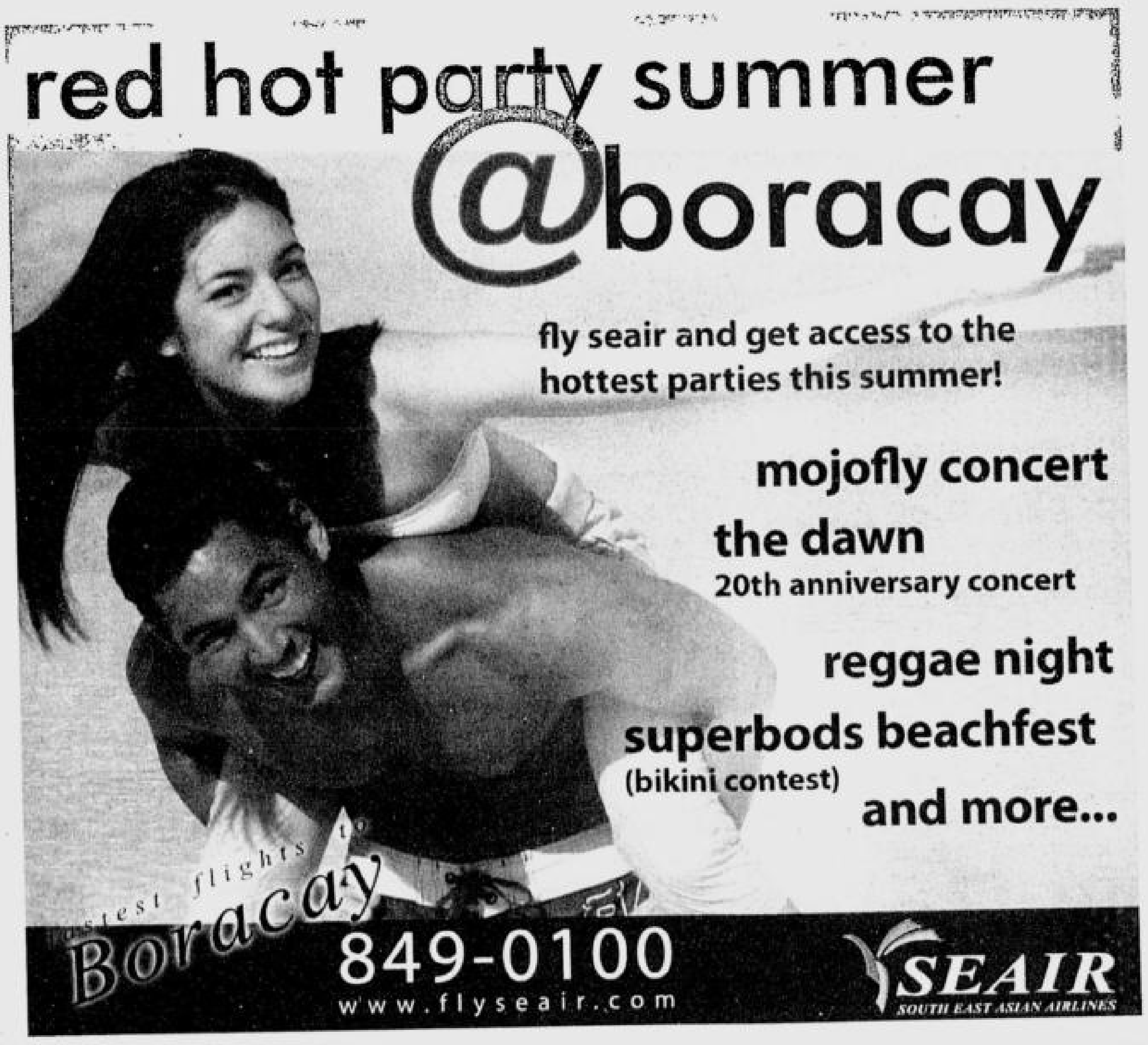
If you're part of the school newspaper staff, take things to a different level by submitting to magazines. If they like your work, they might get in touch with you to do an article or two for them. Some magazines have a regular pool of teen writers, such as Candy's Council of Cool and Seventeen's Teen Advisory Board. They can be your stepping stone to a regular writing career.

Take a writing course

Taking up Creative Writing or Journalism in college may sound easy, but it's not. There are deadlines every week, and the professors are pretty tough. However, this will definitely set you on the right path, should you choose to follow that career (some back out and shift to other courses, or end up doing something completely different when they graduate).

On the other hand, a lot of excellent writers are graduates of other courses such as Engineering, Business Administration or other unrelated courses, so having a writing course in college is no guarantee of a steady career later on.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com



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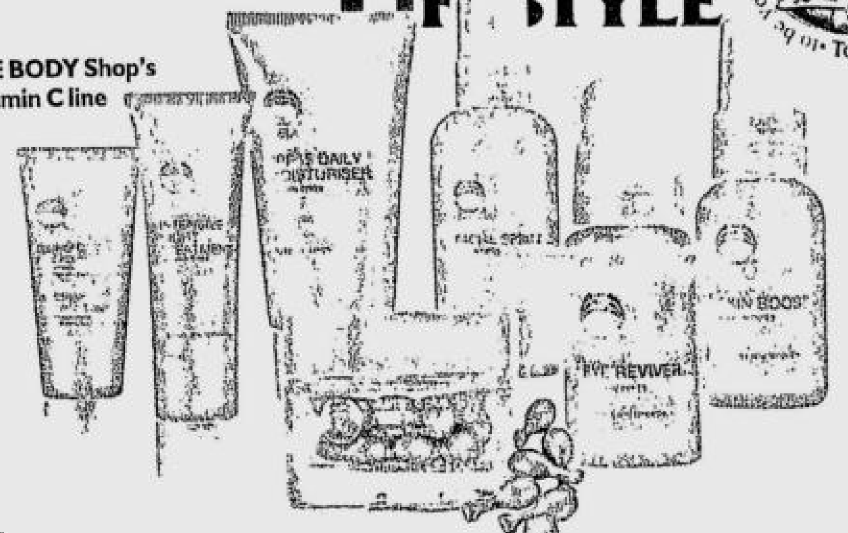
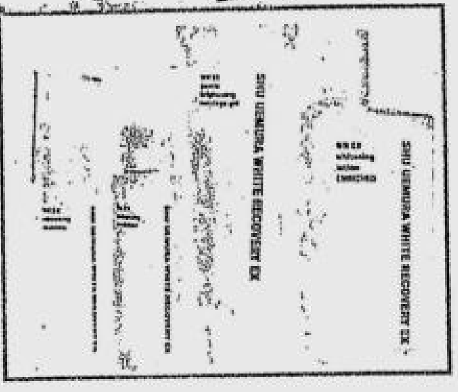
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

marie claire
PLUS! Our Beauty Experts' Top Pic
WHEN MOM DRIVES YO CRAZY
The Town Where Parents W Gay Sons
fashion flair

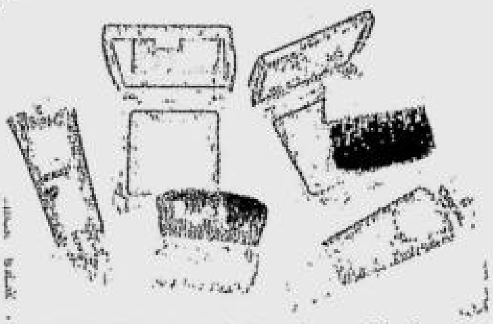
CHECK out the May issue of Marie Claire for more beauty buys.

THE BODY Shop's Vitamin C line





SHU UEMURA'S White Recovery line contains an essence, emulsion, massage gel, and lotion.



L'OREAL Colorjuice in Raspberry, Blush Delice in Fresh Papaya and Pink Grapefruit, and Orange Colorjuice

TIGI Catwalk spray protects your hair and gives it shine.

SUMMER glowin'

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Ocs Alvarez

SUMMER, PERHAPS, IS THE BEST time to be *kikay*. There's no need to fuss over all-night term papers and projects, and getting ready in the morning doesn't have to take all of two minutes, unlike during the regular school season.

The real skinny

However, it is also not the best season to pile on tons of concealer and powder, because the humid weather will make them cake. So work on your skin first. If you suffered from heavy breakouts during the month of the term papers, it might be a good idea to visit your dermatologist before applying various products on your face, as they might make your acne worse. Try VMV Hypoallergenics' facials at their free-standing store at the Independent Lifestyles wing in Power Plant Mall at Rockwell (8908155).

Start with a basic skincare routine: Cleanse, tone and moisturize regularly. It is even more important during this season to use sunscreen every day, even if you're not going to the beach. Even harsh indoor lights cause skin damage that won't show until a few years later, when it's too late to reverse.

VMV's unbeatable line of sunscreen, which includes various degrees of SPF30, 45, 60 and 70, may not be cheap but the price of good skin is definitely worth it. The SPF70 Sport Sunblock is sweat and waterproof: Perfect for athletes and beach bums.

If you have pimples, zap minor breakouts with a dab of Mario Badescu's famous Drying Lotion, which contains alcohol to dry the zit, and calamine lotion to soothe it. Follow up with the MB Healing Cream, a moisturizer that effectively calms aggravated red areas. For back acne (bacne), use an exfoliating scrub (try L'Oreal Exfotonic) to get rid of dead skin cells that make your skin look rough and dull, and follow with a dab of VMV Id Sweat Acne and Overall Antibacterial Gel on the affected spots.

If you've already gotten sunburned from a trip to the beach, take extra care in treating your skin. Sunburned skin is damaged skin, so choose your products well. Slather your skin with cooling and moisturizing products to soothe the burn and to prevent any further flaking. Do not peel off burnt skin with your fingers—you'll only tug at other parts that aren't ready to come off yet.

Treat yourself to The Body Shop's Vitamin C line, which contains antioxidants to protect the skin from the sun and free radicals which accelerate aging. For maximum benefits, try the Vitamin C-Plus Time Release Capsules and the Vitamin C Intensive Night Treatment to make your skin glow.

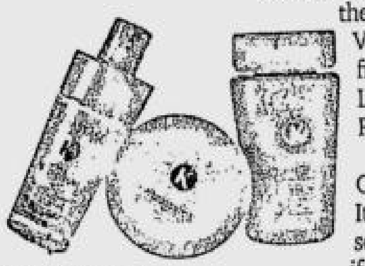
Try Clarins Sun Wrinkle Control Cream with SPF30 for a treatment that provides protection at the same time, and L'Oreal Nutrisoft Velvet Body Lotion over dry, cracked areas. For a moisturizing product with a sexy sheen, go for VMV Elation Skin Dew body oil.

Even out your complexion with a product that naturally lightens your skin—do not, under any circumstances, use bleaching products unless you want to cause further damage.

Shu Uemura's reformulated White Recovery

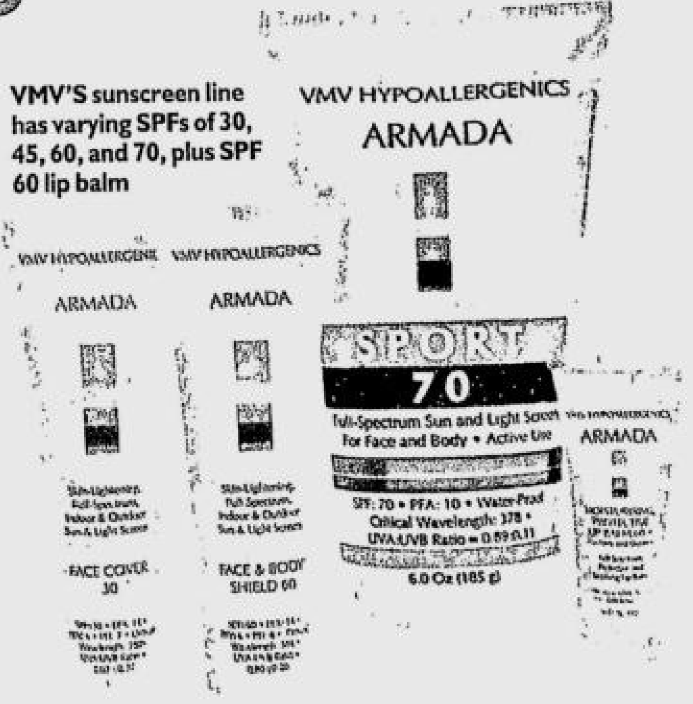
SUMMER/ C2

TIGI Bed Head's Manipulator shampoo and conditioner

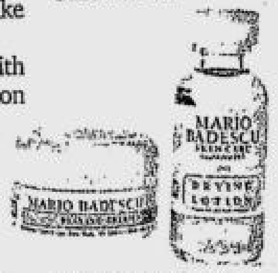


PAMPER sun-damaged hair with Kerastase Soleil hair protecting spray, hair mask and shampoo.

VMV'S sunscreen line has varying SPFs of 30, 45, 60, and 70, plus SPF 60 lip balm


VMV HYPOALLERGENICS
ARMADA
SPORT
70
Full-Spectrum Sun and Light Screen For Face and Body • Active Use
SPF: 70 • PFA: 10 • Water-Proof
Critical Wavelength: 378 •
UVA/UVB Ratio = 0.89 (0.11)
6.0 Oz (185 g)
FACE COVER 30
FACE & BODY SHIELD 60

MAYBELLINE Dream Matte mousse, L'Oreal True Match and Maybelline Clear Smooth Gel



MARIO Badescu Healing Cream and Drying Lotion

CLARINS Sun Wrinkle Control Cream SPF30, Clarins Sun Care Cream SPF30, L'Oreal UV Perfect sunscreen SPF50, DiorSnow Pure UV SPF50

L'OREAL Exfotonic exfoliating scrub, Nutrisoft Velvet Body Lotion and Firming Body Gel

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ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Hit the Road

You + friends + a full tank = adventure on the road

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

IF YOU HAD ONE OR TWO days off and a full tank of gas, where would you go? For the wanderlust in you, 2bU! gives a rundown of beaches, historical monuments and natural wonders within driving distance of Manila.

Tagaytay/Taal

There's a lot more to Tagaytay than Mushroomburger and Breakfast at Antonio's. A short drive from Tagaytay is Talisay town. Hire a small boat out to the volcano island in the middle of Taal Lake. You can arrange to trek up the volcano crater, or you can charter a horse to save you all that hiking.

If you'd rather stay away from this active volcano, head to the Taal Lake Yacht Club for sailing, hobie racing and windsurfing. Pitch your tent on the ground and have a roaring bonfire in the evening by the lake. On the way back to Manila in the morning, stop by Leslie's in Tagaytay for *bulalo* and for a spectacular view of Taal Volcano.

Nasugbu, Matabungkay

If lakes are not your thing, drive another 45 minutes past Tagaytay down the hill to Lian. Turn right after the sugar mill to Nasugbu, or turn left to Matabungkay beach. You can hire a raft for a few hours for around P1,000. For European-style cooking, hie off to the restaurant at Coral Beach Club in Matabungkay. An overnight stay at the more well-known resorts will set you back by P2,000-P4,000 per room.

Laiya, San Juan, Batangas

If you'd rather laze around on a white-sand beach, but don't want to fly (or drive!) all the way to Boracay, head south to Laiya beach on the South Eastern tip of Batangas. Both economy and upscale resorts abound in this area, so budget shouldn't be much of a problem.

Bring your own picnic basket and rent an open shed if you just plan to stay for the day. Swim, snorkel and go boating. If you've had too much of the sea, trek to the Naambon waterfalls about 3 km from the beach. For culture buffs, hop to the town proper and gawk at the elegant pre-war mansions. Laiya is quite a drive, so check www.camperspoint.com for directions.

Rizal, Laguna

Allot an entire weekend to go around Laguna Lake. Start your trip by taking in the sights at Antipolo. Drive down through Cainta, Taytay, Angono, Binangonan, Morong, Baras, Tanay and Pillila. Most of the churches in these towns were built in the 18th century, so it's best to drop by each.

From there you'll reach the town of Mabitac, Laguna. Head to Pangil, and then to Pakil, renowned for its carved toothpicks. Next stop would be Paete, where woodcarvings and *taka* (papièr mâché) await. Drive on to Lumban, and check out the exquisite embroidery on the town's famous barong Tagalogs.

Pagsanjan then awaits, its numerous Spanish era stone houses dotting the main road. Stop by Durafe for its *pansit*, and check out Step-Rite across the street for really cheap shoes. Check in at any of the numerous resorts in Pagsanjan, where you can shoot the rapids up to Pagsanjan Falls the next morning. Once you reach the falls, a raft will bring you to a cave right behind the waterfalls.

Resume your drive through Pila, until you hit the town of Bay. Keep your eye open for Kamayan sa Palaisdaan, where you can eat lunch in any of the huts floating around a pond filled with carp. And of course, don't drive past Los Baños without some *buko* pie from Lety's along the national highway.

You'll need a lot of food as you might get stuck in traffic in Calamba, but with a little more patience, you'll be back on South Superhighway and heading home to the city.

Kapampangan cuisine

Just 45 minutes north of Manila is the culinary center of the Philippines—Pampanga. Ivan Henares, heritage activist, recommends a visit to Claude Tayag's house for bottled *buro* and *taba ng talangka*. Then head to Furniture Clay in Mabalacat, Pampanga, where export-quality furniture pieces abound at dirt-cheap factory prices.

For lunch, head to Abe's Farm Pampanga in Mt. Arayat. Savor delicacies such as *sinuteng hinubarang kuhol* (escargots sautéed in olive oil with garlic and chilies), *balo-balo* (fermented rice and shrimp) and crispy *tadyang* "D Original" (marinated beef ribs deep-fried to a delicious crispiness). Then drop by Betis Church in Guagua, dubbed the Sistine Chapel of the Philippines, to view its wall and ceiling murals.

Don't forget to take home some *ensaymadas* from San Fernando, which can be as big as eight inches!

Finally, cap off your day with dinner at the C Italian Restaurant along Fields Avenue, Angeles City for Chris Locher's unexpected culinary delights. If you have an extra day, arrange for a river cruise along the Rio Grande de Pampanga. Find out why tourists are flocking to the Candaba Bird Sanctuary and to the mangroves in Masantol.

Visit http://ivanhenares.blogspot.com for more on all things Kapampangan, or call the Center for Kapampangan Studies at (045) 888-8691 loc. 1311.

Laguna-Quezon

For a day of arts and crafts, drive down all the way to Calamba, Laguna. Start off your day at the Pettyjohn Pottery Workshop (tel. 049-5451608) with its pieces made of local clay and ash. About 30 minutes away is the City of San Pablo. Head to Kusina Salud (tel. 049-2466878, 7226985), the house of Patis Tesoro in Barangay Sta. Cruz, Putol, San Pablo City, for chef Paul Poblador's sumptuous lunches.

Then just outside San Pablo City is Tiaong, Quezon. Ugu Bigyan's Potter's Garden awaits at 490 Alvarez Village, Barangay Lucasan, Tiaong. If you have time, drop by Villa Escudero or check out any of San Pablo City's seven lakes on your way back. At 104 hectares, Sampalok Lake is the biggest and is conveniently located in the city proper.

Take the Alaminos-Sto. Tomas, Batangas route on your way back to the South Superhighway so you can enjoy an early dinner at Rose and Grace along the highway. Warning, though, this is not your ordinary air-conditioned *turo-turo*. A small plate of vegetables will set you back by about P190. Stick to their specialty, the *bulalo*, to make the visit worthwhile.

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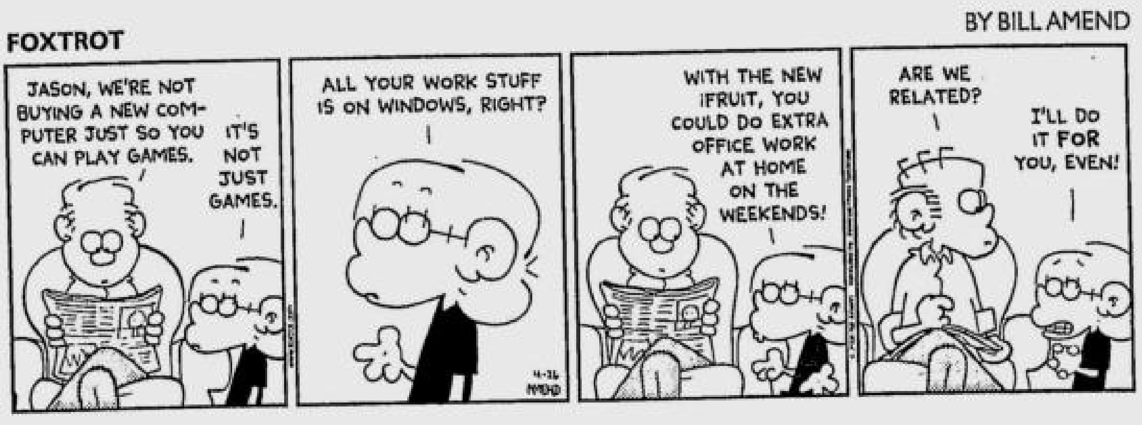
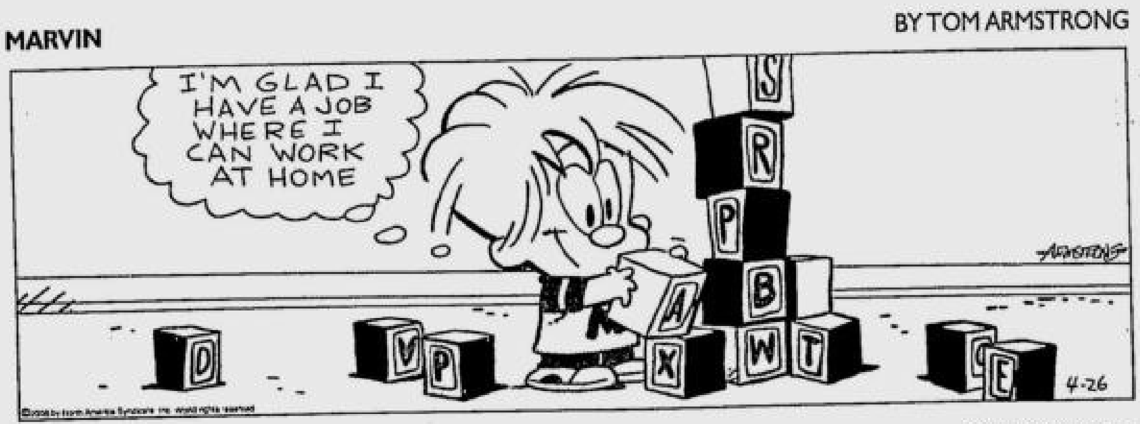
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


JASON, WE'RE NOT BUYING A NEW COMPUTER JUST SO YOU CAN PLAY GAMES.
IT'S NOT JUST GAMES.
ALL YOUR WORK STUFF IS ON WINDOWS, RIGHT?
WITH THE NEW IFRUIT, YOU COULD DO EXTRA OFFICE WORK AT HOME ON THE WEEKENDS!
ARE WE RELATED?
I'LL DO IT FOR YOU, EVEN!
4-26

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M GLAD I HAVE A JOB WHERE I CAN WORK AT HOME
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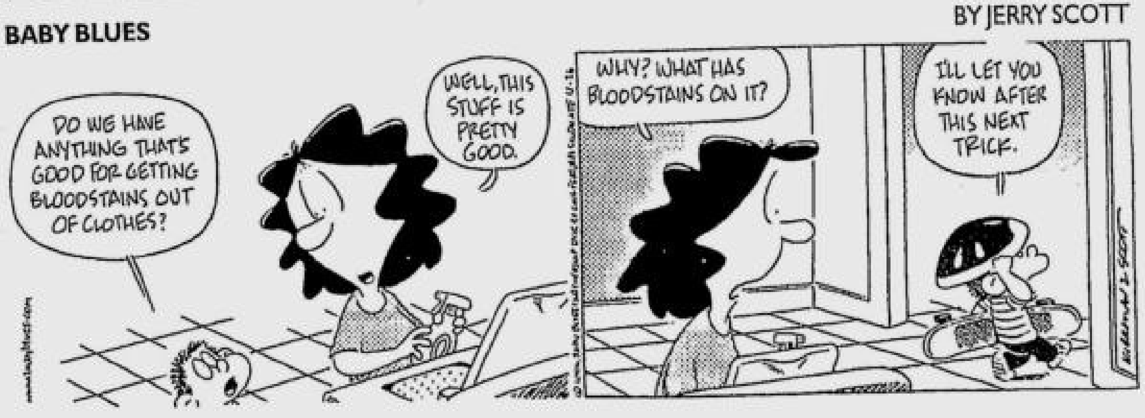
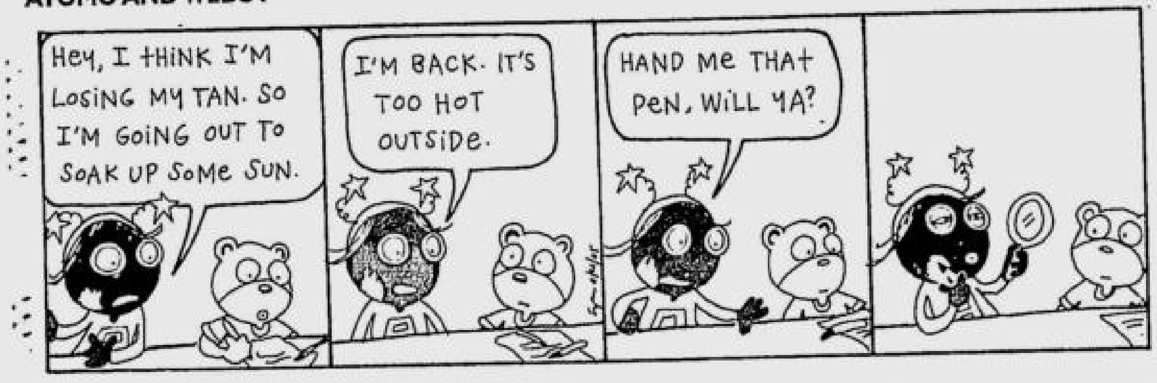
ARMSTRONG
4-26

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


DO WE HAVE ANYTHING THAT'S GOOD FOR GETTING BLOODSTAINS OUT OF CLOTHES?
WELL, THIS STUFF IS PRETTY GOOD.
WHY? WHAT HAS BLOODSTAINS ON IT?
I'LL LET YOU KNOW AFTER THIS NEXT TRICK.

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, I think I'M LOSING MY TAN. So I'M GOING OUT To SOAK UP SoMe SUN.
I'M BACK. IT'S TOO HoT OUTSIDe.
HAND Me THAT PeN, WILL YA?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're creative. You appreciate form, color, light and texture. You also have wonderful visualization skills. Because you're sensitive to your environment, you like pleasant surroundings. Many of you are psychic. When you're 25, you begin to express your ideas more verbally. You lead a busy life! By 55, you value your security and home life more. Focus on partnerships this year.
Birthdate of: Jet Li, martial artist/actor; Michael Damian, actor; I.M. Pei, architect.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Ask yourself what you need to do to make your heart sing. All Aries people are seeking ways to express their creative talents and joy. Do it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A piece of terra firma and a solid house are what you want. Now is the time to renovate, buy or sell, or fix up where you live to create an anchor in the world.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Because you like change and you're light on your feet, you'll easily handle a shift in jobs or residences that might occur this year or next. Just go with the flow.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's important to establish steady work for yourself now. You need to know what it is you want to do in order to earn money. (You can do this.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Even those of you who are social are pulling in now. With Saturn in your sign, you feel more insular and less inclined to socialize or spread yourself too thin.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This year and next, you will definitely say goodbye to some aspect of your life. You will be giving up places, people and property. Don't worry. This stuff was meant to go.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Learning to fit in with groups is your challenge this year. It's time to find your place in the tribe.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is definitely your time of harvest. What is working is definitely working; what is not working is obvious. Cut your losses. It's a time of culmination.

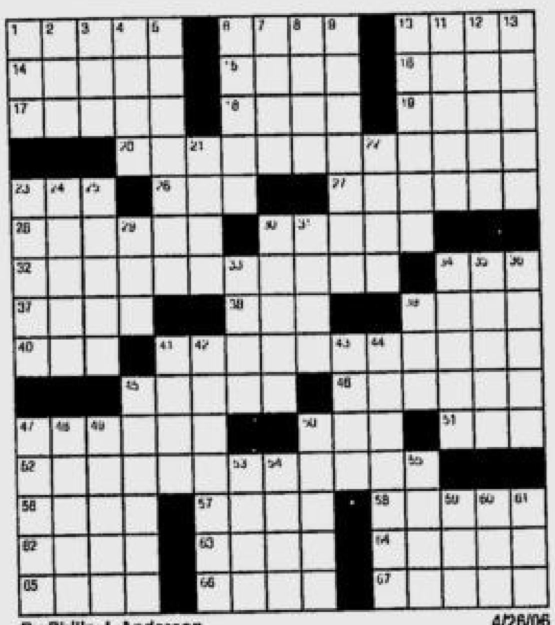
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You are now preparing for success that is approximately two to three years away. Get all the schooling you might need. Do not rest on your laurels.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Because the resources of partners might diminish now, you are learning to trust in yourself. This gives you greater independence. You see that you have all the self-reliance you need!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many of you have left long-term partnerships. This wasn't easy. This break might still be going on. You are starting to look to your external accomplishments in life.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): In a major 30-year cycle, this is probably your most hardworking time. Don't worry if you feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities this year. You'll be OK.

DAILY CROSSWORD

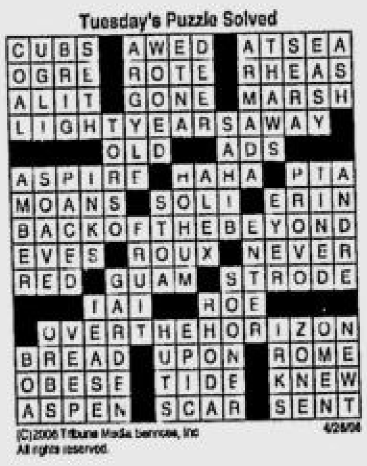


By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
4/26/06

ACROSS
1 Non-standard English
6 Encourage a yegg
10 Jazz singing style
14 Rome's river
15 Burrowing garden pest
16 Sugar source
17 Actress Verdugo
18 Novelist Stoker
19 Gymnast Korbut
20 Jack Lemmon role
23 Ninny
26 __out of (decline)
27 Seniors
28 Philippines metropolis
30 "__ Bulba"
32 Matt Damon role
34 Bleacher cry
37 Knight's wife
38 Our sun
39 "Star Wars" knight
40 WSW opp.
41 Dustin Hoffman role
45 Livestock shelters
46 Longing
47 Notify
50 Narc's org.
51 Showed the way
52 Gary Cooper role
56 Domain
57 Give a hand?
58 Too weird
62 Affirm with certainty
63 Nora's pet
64 Gridlock
65 Anatomical sac
66 Ollie's partner
67 The present time

DOWN
1 Fr. holy woman
2 Small, in Dogpatch
3 Justice Fortas
4 Oahu goose
5 Rolled oats breakfast
6 Circuit
7 Bjorn of tennis
8 Distinctive style
9 Poster paint
10 Reprimands
11 Have a cow
12 Ire
13 Rips
21 Brief quarrel
22 __-Ude, Russia
23 Sufficient
24 Foil alternative
25 Derogatory
29 Wrigley Field growth
30 Lopes along
31 "The Clan of the Cave Bear" heroine
33 Sports fans' channel
34 Lube again
35 Love to pieces
36 Tackled a trail
39 Intermediate learning inst.
41 Feel concern
42 Fleets
43 Logical start?
44 Closest
45 "The African Queen" star
47 Writer Asimov
48 Having chutzpah
49 Releases
50 Poet Thomas
53 Aerie
54 Ciao
55 Casino game
59 Neato, nowadays
60 Author Levin
61 Tarzan Ron

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



C	U	B	S	■	A	W	E	D	■	A	T	S	E	A
O	G	R	E	■	R	O	T	E	■	R	H	E	A	S
A	L	I	T	■	G	O	N	E	■	M	A	R	S	H
L	I	G	H	T	Y	E	A	R	S	A	W	A	Y	■
■	■	■	■	O	L	D	■	■	A	D	S	■	■	■
A	S	P	I	R	E	■	H	A	H	A	■	P	T	A
M	O	A	N	S	■	S	O	L	I	■	E	R	I	N
B	A	C	K	O	F	T	H	E	B	E	Y	O	N	D
E	V	E	S	■	R	O	U	X	■	N	E	V	E	R
R	E	D	■	G	U	A	M	■	S	T	R	O	D	E
■	■	■	I	A	I	■	■	R	O	E	■	■	■	■
■	O	V	E	R	T	H	E	H	O	R	I	Z	O	N
B	R	E	A	D	■	U	P	O	N	■	R	O	M	E
O	B	E	S	E	■	T	I	D	E	■	K	N	E	W
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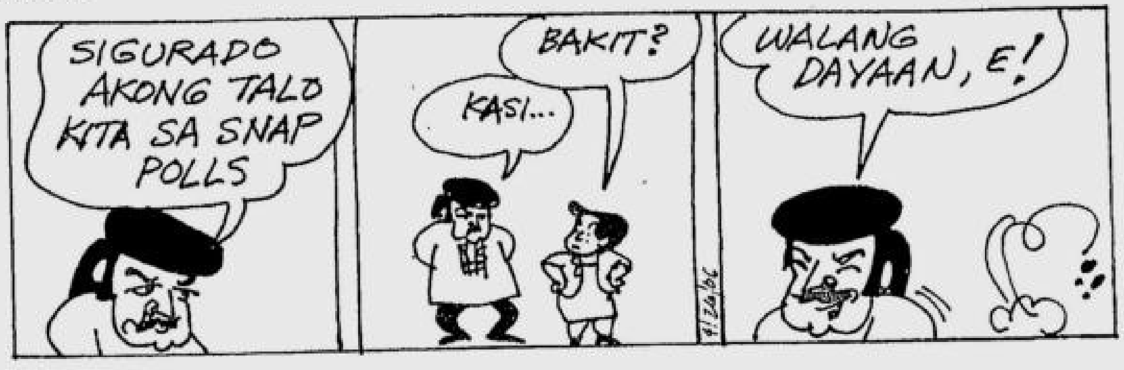
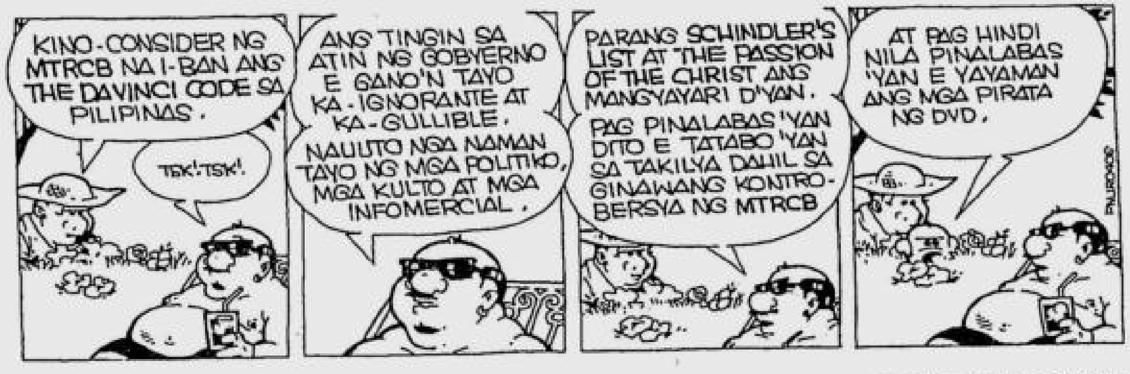
4/26/06

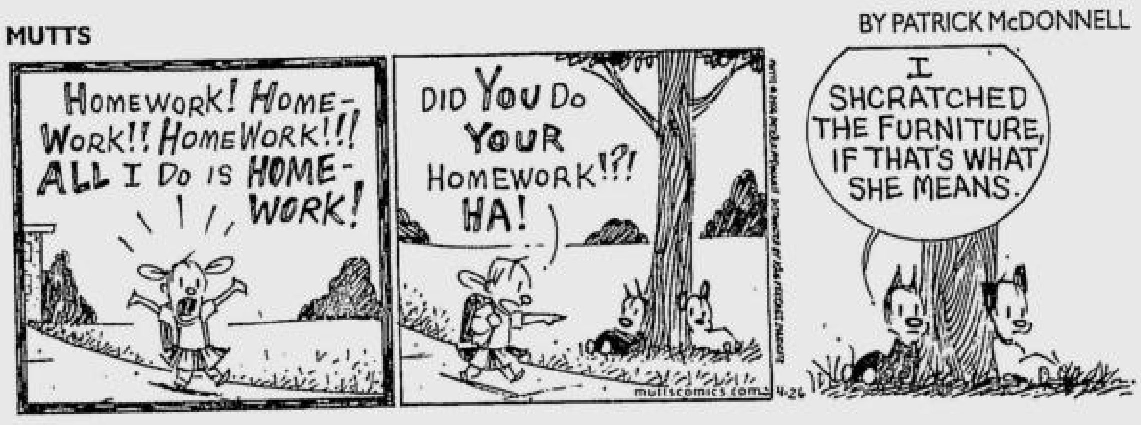
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


SIGURADO AKONG TALO KITA SA SNAP POLLS
KASI...
BAKIT?
WALANG DAYAAN, E!

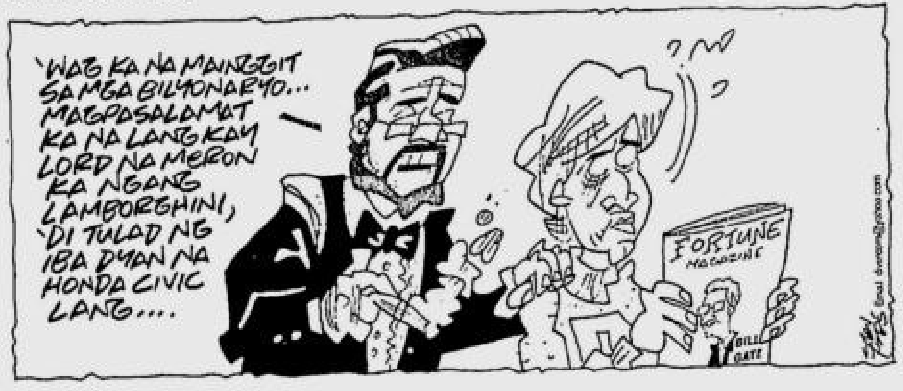
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


KINO-CONSIDER NG MTRCB NA I-BAN ANG THE DAVINCI CODE SA PILIPINAS.
TSK! TSK!
ANG TINGIN SA ATIN NG GOBYERNO E GANO'N TAYO KA-IGNORANTE AT KA-GULLIBLE.
NAUUTO NGA NAMAN TAYO NG MGA POLITIKO, MGA KULTO AT MGA INFOMERCIAL.
PARANG SCHINDLER'S LIST AT THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST ANG MANGYAYARI D'YAN.
PAG PINALABAS 'YAN DITO E TATABO 'YAN SA TAKILYA DAHIL SA GINAWANG KONTROBERSYA NG MTRCB
AT PAG HINDI NILA PINALABAS 'YAN E YAYAMAN ANG MGA PIRATA NG DVD.

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

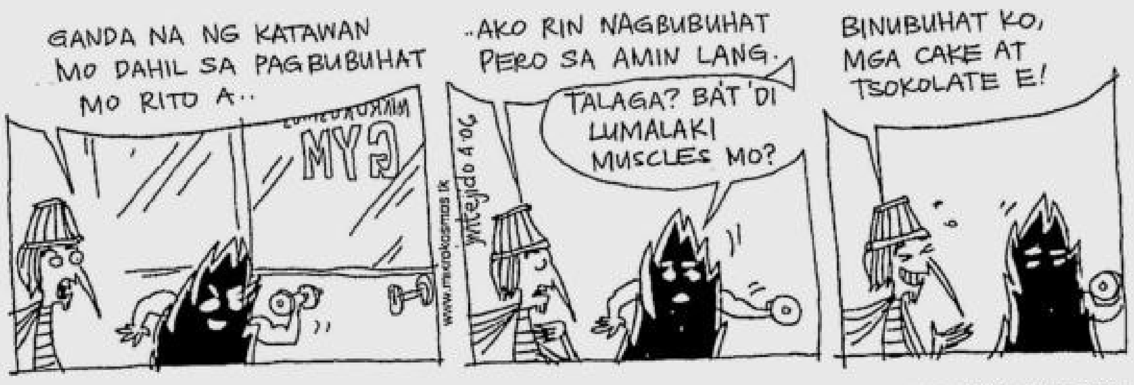

HomewoRK! HomeWoRK!! HomeWoRK!!! ALL I Do is HOME-WORK!
DID You Do YouR HOMEWORK!?! HA!
I SHCRATCHED THE FURNITURE, IF THAT'S WHAT SHE MEANS.
muttscomics.com 4-26

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

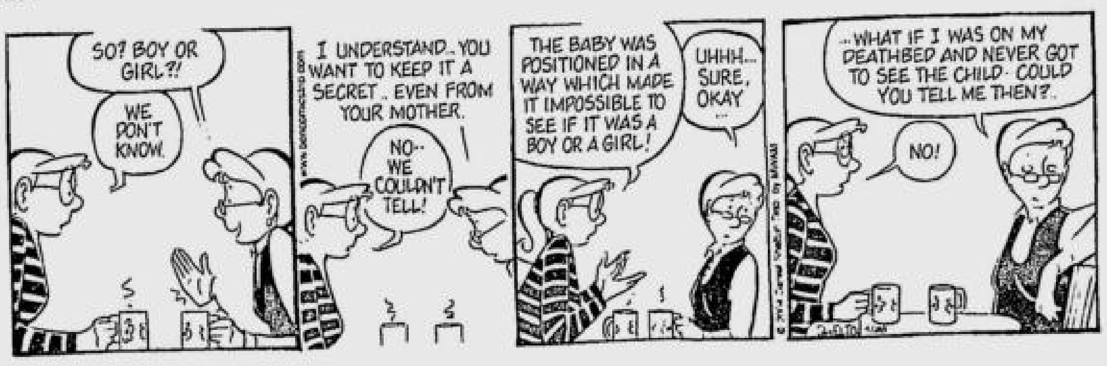

'WAG KA NA MAINGGIT SA MGA BILYONARYO... MAGPASALAMAT KA NA LANG KAY LORD NA MERON KA NGANG LAMBORGHINI, 'DI TULAD NG IBA DYAN NA HONDA CIVIC LANG....
FORTUNE MAGAZINE
BILL GATE

A MILLIONAIRE TEACHING HIS SON THE VIRTUE OF CONTENTMENT

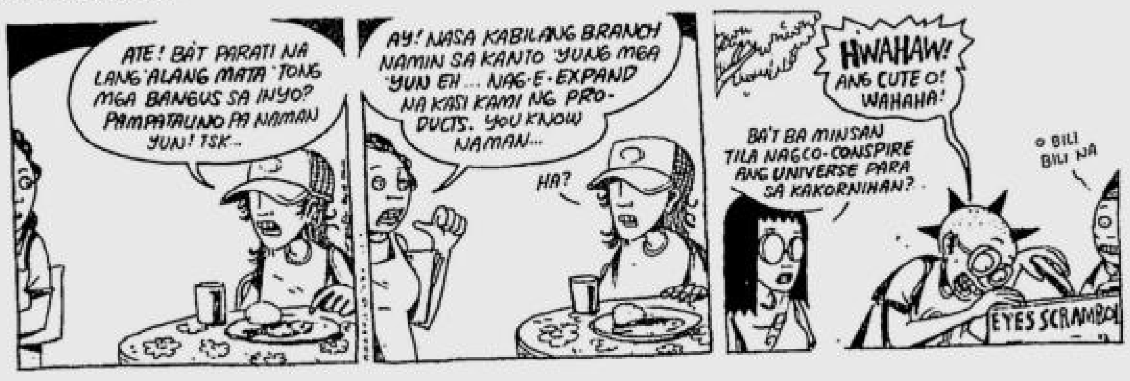
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GANDA NA NG KATAWAN MO DAHIL SA PAGBUBUHAT MO RITO A..
GYM
..AKO RIN NAGBUBUHAT PERO SA AMIN LANG.
TALAGA? BAT 'DI LUMALAKI MUSCLES MO?
BINUBUHAT KO, MGA CAKE AT TSOKOLATE E!
www.mikrokosmos.tk

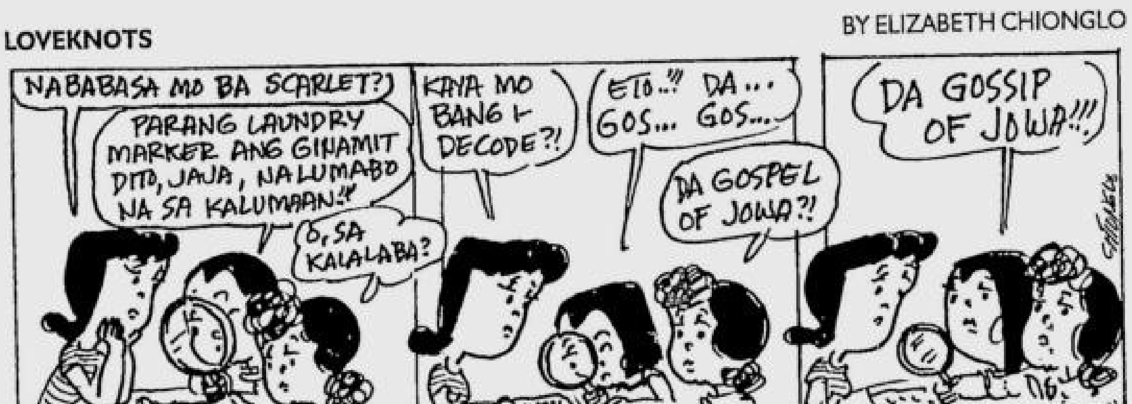
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO? BOY OR GIRL?!
WE DON'T KNOW.
I UNDERSTAND.. YOU WANT TO KEEP IT A SECRET.. EVEN FROM YOUR MOTHER.
NO- WE COULDN'T TELL!
THE BABY WAS POSITIONED IN A WAY WHICH MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE IF IT WAS A BOY OR A GIRL!
UHHH... SURE, OKAY
...WHAT IF I WAS ON MY DEATHBED AND NEVER GOT TO SEE THE CHILD. COULD YOU TELL ME THEN?
NO!

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


ATE! BAT PARATI NA LANG 'ALANG MATA 'TONG MGA BANGUS SA INYO? PAMPATALINO PA NAMAN YUN! TSK..
AY! NASA KABILANG BRANCH NAMIN SA KANTO 'YUNG MGA 'YUN EH... NAG-E-EXPAND NA KASI KAMI NG PRODUCTS. YOU KNOW NAMAN...
HA?
HWAHAW! ANG CUTE O! WAHAHA!
BA'T BA MINSAN TILA NAGCO-CONSPIRE ANG UNIVERSE PARA SA KAKORNIHAN?
O BILI BILI NA
EYES SCRAMBOL

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NABABASA MO BA SCARLET?
PARANG LAUNDRY MARKER ANG GINAMIT DITO, JAJA, NALUMABO NA SA KALUMAAN!
O, SA KALALABA?
KAYA MO BANG I-DECODE?!
ETO..!! DA... GOS... GOS...
DA GOSPEL OF JOWA?!
DA GOSSIP OF JOWA!!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

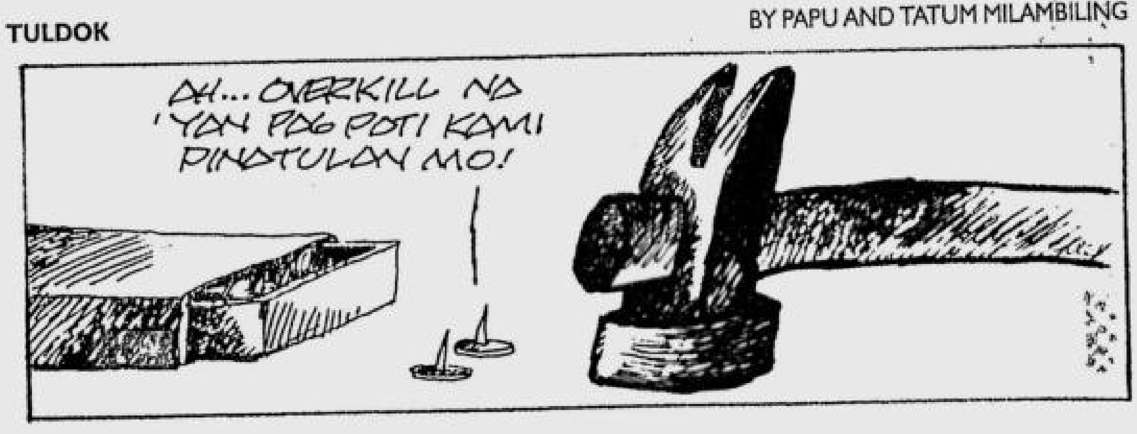

AH... OVERKILL NA 'YAN PAG POTI KAMI PINATULAN MO!

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

HOORAY FOR LAUGHS

By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent

SUMMER IS A TIME TO LET loose, relax and laugh a lot—the harder, the better. For those of us who seek a blissful state of constant mirth this summer, here are some things worth checking out.

Comedy clubs

If you like to see people make fun of themselves (and don't mind being ridiculed yourself), try visiting Punch Line on Quezon Boulevard or Laugh Line on Timog Avenue. Both clubs have mostly gay emcees who do their darndest to entertain people, sometimes even at their own expense. Laugh Line is also a sing-along bar, so it's a good choice for those who enjoy belting it out. Another place worth visiting is The Library in Malate, which has produced a number of popular stand-up comics like Allan K.

Comedy shows

Live stand-up comedy featuring Jim Jeffries, Richard Morton, Caimh McDonell is about to hit Manila. Organized by the Manila branch of the Punch Line Comedy Club, these live stand-up comedy shows feature some of the funniest people to come out of Western civilization. Not for the easily offended, though, as they contain some blunt irreverent adult jokes. Definitely not for kids, too. Tickets are P1,950. The date is May 17, at Heckle and Jeckle, G/F, Villa Bldg., Jupiter St. cor. Makati Ave. Call 8951752.

Willy Nepomuceno's Pinoy Big Bother Conspiracy Edition. Willie spoofs the popular reality TV show "Pinoy Big Brother " by putting the most famous and infamous news headliners under one roof: Pacman, Gringo, Mang Pidol, Ping, Ka Freddie, Erap, FVR, Tita Cory and Kris Aquino, just to name a few. Watch Gringo Honasan plot a coup against "Kuya," Garci try to avoid eviction or Erap work to outsmart Kris Aquino in her own game show. Catch it tomorrow at the Music Museum. Call 8919999.

Funny movies

Scary Movie 4. The Scary Movie series, which spoofs and sends-up scenes from other well-known movies, has its own cult following. The fourth installment deconstructs "Saw," "Saw II," "The Village," "The Grudge," "War of the Worlds," "Million Dollar Baby," "Brokeback Mountain" and many more. Take this: the opening sequence, a spoof of "Saw," will feature Dr. Phil McGraw and Shaquille O'Neal.

"Some Like It Hot" and "Blazing Saddles." These films were selected by the American Film Institute as two of the funniest movies of all time (first and sixth, respectively). Pick them for your own enjoyment and as a tribute to comic legends like Jack Lemmon and Mel Brooks. They may be a bit hard to find in our neighborhood video shops, but they're well worth the effort.

> For those seeking a state of constant mirth this summer, here are some things worth checking out

Self Unfoldment Fellowship, Inc. (SUFI– ISIS)
7C DLC Bldg Araneta Ave (near corner SM Sta. Mesa Centerpoint), Quezon City
Telefax 454 0145 / 0919 + 2909111 / Email: mangmike1st@yahoo.com

Announces the following course workshops:

1. **Ageless Wisdom** – A one day esoteric literacy course designed to provide a basic understanding on: • The Wisdom of the Ages • The Purpose of Existence • Truth and the Nature of God • The Book of Life • Karma & the Universal Laws of Nature • Reincarnation • The Destiny of Man • The Inner World • The Different Bodies of Man • The Different Planes of Nature • What is Real Evil • Man's Health & Disease • The Art & Science of Meditation •

   The value of knowing the TRUTH is shown by its capacity to purify, enable, and uplift ones consciousness.

2. **Numerology (Basic Course)** – Shows you how to use the magical powers of numbers to manifest your goals & aspirations. Learn how to determine your life's purpose/birth path. How to use your lucky number aspects to empower you intuitively, financially, & spiritually. Plus discover the hidden power in your birthday number to know you're your empowering name, potentialyzing signature & lucky personal symbol.

   Numerology (Advance Course) – Provides the synthesis and practical applications on the science of numbers, thru the Kaballah of numbers.

3. **The Science of Immortality – Winged Unicorn Technique**: Activate your inner eye and develop clairvoyance to see "clearly" and unveil the wonders of Reality.

4. **Vegetarian Cooking** – Restore your health and stay fit for life! Save the environment, too, while learning to cook sumptuous meals (15 main courses and 15 soups).

Ageless Wisdom (2 Days)	Vegetarian Cooking (1 Day)
May 6–7, 20–21, Jun 2-3, 17-18 (Sat 1 PM – 5 PM / Sun 9 AM – 5 PM) Course Fee: P 3,000	May 13, 27 Jun 10, 24 (Sat 9 AM - 5 PM) Course Fee: P 2,500
Numerology (1 Day)	**Unicorn Clairvoyance (1 Day) ***
May 6, 7, 20, 21, Jun 2, 3, 17, 18 (Sat 9 AM – 5 PM / Sun 9 AM – 5 PM) Course Fee: P 5,000	May 13, 14, 27, 28, Jun 10, 11, 24, 25 (Sat 9 AM – 5 PM / Sun 9 AM – 5 PM) Course Fee: P 5,000

* Requisite: Ageless Wisdom
All courses include materials, Certificate of Attendance, Meal, & Snacks.

Win 'American Idol' goodies!

SIT UP, SING ALONG AND ROOT FOR your idols, but make sure you pay attention when you watch "American Idol" on Star World tonight, because 2bU! is giving away exclusive, limited-edition "American Idol" goodies to three fans who can answer the following questions correctly about tonight's show:

1. What will Paris Bennett sing tonight?
2. Who will be the last singer?
3. Who do you think will be booted out tomorrow night?

Three "American Idol" fans who e-mail their answers first to starworld americanidol_on_2bu@yahoo.com will win a limited-edition "American Idol" shower radio pack and a CD holder each! The winners' names will be revealed in next Wednesday's issue of 2bU, along with a fresh batch of questions you should watch out for!

"American Idol" airs live on Star World, at 5 p.m., today, with prime-time telecasts at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Last week's winners:
Hans Pura
Karmela Franco
Erwin Nolido

Winners can pick up their prizes at 7/F, RCI Bldg., 105 Rada St., Legaspi Village, Makati. Call 7513805-06 or 8937472.

Summer and travel in style

THE APRIL ISSUE OF MPH (MOBILE Philippines) magazine, the most visible homegrown magazine on mobile technology, is now available in newsstands.

This summer, MPH turns up the heat with Phoemela Baranda on the cover. Phoem talks about her hectic traveling experiences and how people mispronounce her name. She also gives friendly advice on how to match your gadgets with your active lifestyle.

The issue also features the beautiful Ala Paredes, an artist in every sense of the word. Before she finally migrates to Australia with her family, Ala talks about her identity as a Filipino and her music—mobile music, that is!

It's all about the great outdoors and traveling for the month of April, so the MPH editors have decided to showcase the latest techniques in ruggedizing digital devices and sprucing up your digital camera for some fun in the sun. The issue also features an exclusive look at the BenQ-Siemens buyout with a special hands-on review of the S88, the new flagship phone of the "East meets West" merger.

This issue also contains reviews of the new Kodak V570, the world's first dual lens camera; the new Motorola SLVR; and the 3G-ready Nokia N70.

MPH is a monthly publication geared toward the Filipino who is always on the go. Available in all newsstands and technology hubs for P80.

Hit the Road

From page D1

Whether it's a weekend on the beach or a day of checking out historical sites, there's a lot awaiting the weary city dweller outside the metropolis.

Bring lots of drinking water, check if your car air-conditioner is working fine and take along friends who share your adventurous streak.

Buy a road map so that you can plot out your own road trips to out-of-the-way destinations. Just be sure to gas up so you can always drive your way back when you get lost. With a little creativity, a lot of daring and a tank of gas, the next two months might just be your most traveled summer yet.

E-mail the author gmeleen@lycos.com

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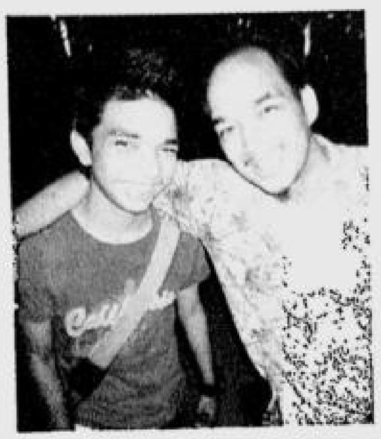
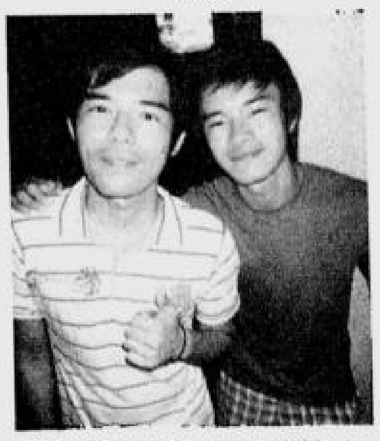


MTV, *AYOS!* Gabriel and TJ Besa do their father-and-son bonding in Boracay.

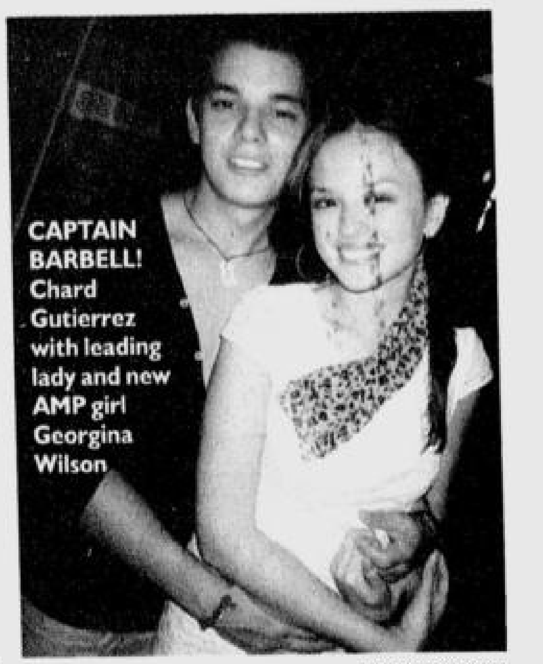
REAL LADY. Nadine Rosia of Real Coffee



HALE, BRO! Champ and Chino Lui Pio

THE KING AND I. Claire and Datu Sumndad rule these party shores.

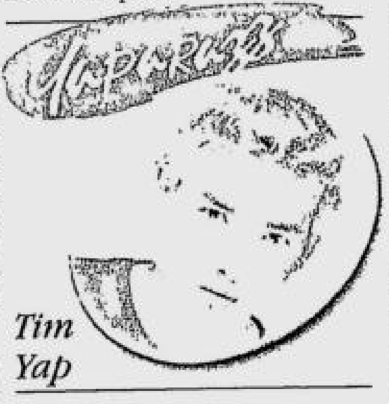
REUNITED RAVE. Savannah Lumen and Martin Ledesma



CAPTAIN BARBELL! Chard Gutierrez with leading lady and new AMP girl Georgina Wilson

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

Bora beach party policies



Tim Yap

STILL ON THE SHORES OF SUMMER'S hottest island—last weekend's Hed Kandy party by Bigfish at Hey Jude's drew partyphiliacs from all over the country to flock and groove to Paul Hill's easy-on-the-ears beats, while elsewhere on the island were pocket events from A to Z.

I first took C—as in Coca-Cola, when I passed by the MTV Summer Break with Coke where Pinoy bands jammed live with the island's locals. This was after I took in A—as in **Anton Ramos'** "Real Sunset Sessions" in Waling-Waling, where sexy scenester **Faith Amigo** celebrated her birthday as well.

My respect for Anton has gone a level up. I have followed his career from his first CD to his latest compilation (heard there are even pirated copies in Quiapo, can you imagine?), and I must say, he really knows his craft. This while still maintaining a friendly and down-to-earth disposition, and never being that "smug-I-know-everything-about-music" type of producer.

On his music, whereas before he made people chill and enjoy the sunset, now he has mastered the art of making people dance to the sunset, and beyond. DJ master **Manolet Dario** continued to wow us with his Manomission party at Aria, where everyone A-list made sure to have their attendance checked.

But my consistent choice is still E. As in **Erwin Edralin**, whose ear candy came after the Hed Kandy DJ. The police had to peacefully shut down the Big Fish party at 7 a.m. Sunday as the island had to resume its family-friendly atmosphere. Some people were jogging to Sunday Mass already, so the parties continued elsewhere.

Penthouse party

My newfound party spot was at the penthouse of Kraft's at D*Mall. Kraft's is the multi-level convenience store at the end of the strip. It was surreal to walk up a flight of stairs full of grocery goods and end up on the roof deck full of party-happy locals and long-time Bora residents all hospitable enough to host good-vibed guests.

The sun was out, but the weekend warriors were sun worshippers as well, so that wasn't a problem. Just don your Ray-Bans and Nikes and you're all good. Other peeps geared up their rooms, all ready for their follow-ups to the all-day action.

Other days of the weekend were devoted to Bora Bound's fifth installation, with nearly nude celebrities frolicking under the sun flaunting sponsored freebies. I almost joined the Motorola 3G island relay race, (to win the latest V3x 3G-capable Motorola phone), but I remembered my ACL injury (which I haven't had operated on yet; paging Dr. **George Canlas**—I'll visit you soon) and just stayed put to cheer on Team Embassy, whose second-place win was just perfect for the evening's Embassy at Cocomangas party, which featured new superstar DJs **Martin Pulgar** and **Owens Sun**.

I also gave **Jenni Epperson** a standing ovation for her new beach cover-ups line for Folded and Hung, launched at Club Paraw.

SPA SEXY. Jove Schrottman with Anne Curtis

BEACH BUDS. Trish Laws and Paolo Gonzalez

IN OR OUT? Kat Cruz and Stephen Ku

Station 2's new bar and hotel Suzuni, owned by **Geni Psinakis** and Seair's **Nikos Gitsis**, hosted two simultaneous parties—one for the Addict Mobile Uno Lounge (it launched Nokia's N91 phone), and another for Calypso Events' blonde-haired DJ **Colette's** Suzuni sunset sessions.

> Peace. Love. Unity. Respect—these four pillars of partying should never ever be forgotten or abused

This weekend, the Century Tuna Body Search will take place at Pier 1, and the week after that, the Nestea Beach Volley tourney—all happenin' on these shores. As one Boracay resident told me over the weekend, here "there's no such thing as off season."

Something not-so-funny

The whole weekend went fine, with giant inflatable branded collaterals spread all over the island. Everything was fun! fun! fun! except that at one point or another, something not-so-funny would happen on the way out of the party forum. Some people had to be ushered out—voluntarily or involuntarily.

MANOMISSION. Miss Finland Thea with Manolet and Jed Dario

It caused some weird commotion inside the good-vibed venue. Temperatures were raised even higher (not the good kind), some people were screaming, others were raising their fists. But it all got lost in the music and mayhem of the moment. I didn't know whether the commotion was in celebration of the party or of something else. I wonder how my good buddy and Big Fish founder, the late DJ **Tuck Cheah**, was taking all this from his DJ throne in heaven.

In this scene (as with any field), it is our responsibility to remind each other why we are here in the first place. Forget ego, and throw your tantrums out the door. If you've had a bad day, make sure you cleanse your energy before you enter the party. We go to an event to have fun, not to stop fights or get BV (bad vibes) from people who can't control their temper, alcohol or whatever.

I am here not to take sides or judge, but to serve as a vanguard to the scene I am very much a part of. Whether you are the promoter, partyphile or producer, aren't we supposed to be one big happy party family?

PLUR. Nope, this four-letter word does not stand for the latest mobile phone or the catchiest new buzzword. This code represents things we stand for and will continue to abide by. Peace. Love. Unity. Respect. These four pillars of partying should never ever be forgotten or abused.

Anybody who forgets deserves to be ushered out the door, pronto.

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